THE

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BY

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

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THE

Inviſible Spy.

BOOK V.

CHAP. I.

The author's introduction to this volume conſiſts only of an apology for making no introduction at all, and his reaſons for that omiſſion.

SINCE my ſetting about this work, I have ſeen ſeveral late treatiſes that are half taken up with introductory prefaces to the public. — On a ſerious examination to what end thoſe long diſcourſes were penned, they ſeemed to me to have been occaſioned either by one or the other of the following motives: Firſt, that an author having contracted with his bookſeller for a certain number of ſheets, without having well conſidered whether his head be ſtored with ſubject matter to make good his engagement, finds himſelf under a neceſſity of filling up the vacant pages by ſaying ſomething by way of an introduction, preface, or advertiſement to the reader. Or, ſecondly, that fearing the eyes of the public will not be ſufficiently open to the merit of his per-

performance; or, perhaps, not have the curioſity even to look into it at all, he thinks proper to beſpeak their favour by a pompous prelude, and ſounds his own praiſes, like a trumpeter at the door of a puppet-ſhew.

Now I am too great a lover of liberty ever to bind myſelf by any ſuch ſlaviſh agreement: the firſt of theſe incentives is quite out of the queſtion, and cannot poſſibly have any weight with me; and as to the ſecond, — as a more perfect knowledge of myſelf than I perceive ſome others have, will not permit me to be over-vain in any thing I do, ſo the indolence of my nature will not permit me to be over anxious for the ſucceſs. Beſides, not having the temptation of the motives aforeſaid, I have more adventures to relate than can be eaſily crowded into this volume, therefore have neither time nor paper to ſpare for an addreſs, which would afford ſo little ſatisfaction to myſelf in the writing, and perhaps leſs to my reader in the peruſing.

CHAP. II.

Contains ſuch matters as, it is highly probable, will be the leaſt pleaſing to thoſe for whoſe ſervice it is moſt intended.

THERE is, according to the wiſe man's phraſe, a folly under the ſun, which, in my opinion, has as little to be ſaid for it as any of the many others of the preſent age, — and that is — an inſatiable inquiſitiveneſs into future events, as if the foreknowledge of what is to come, would enable us either to alleviate or avert the decrees of Providence. — Yet are all ages, all degrees of both ſexes, tainted, more or leſs, with this epidemic frenzy. — It cannot but afford the moſt adoniſhing, as well as melancholy reflections, in a thinking

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ing mind, to obſerve how many impoſtors, in and about this great town, are maintained by pretending to the art of divination, while the induſtrious followers of lawful occupations periſh for want of due encouragement.

As I was one day on my Inviſible Progreſſions, I accompanied a mingled crowd of people into a houſe ſituated in one of the moſt obſcure parts of the city: — at firſt I imagined that this was ſome private chapel, where perſons reſorted to pay their adorations to the Deity in a manner not authoriſed by the government; bat was ſoon convinced of my miſtake, when, inſtead of a pulpit and deſk, I found the room we came into furniſhed only with globes and teleſcopes, and other implements of a ſoothſayer and aſtrologer. — I had not patience to hear what idle predictions this oracle would ſpout forth, eſpecially as I had no acquaintance with any of thoſe who I ſaw came to conſult him; ſo took my leave of the deceiver and the deceived, full of indignation againſt the one, and a pity, mingled with contempt for the other. For what can be ſaid in defence of the underſtanding of thoſe people, who waſte their time and money in conſulting thoſe abject dealers in futurity! — Creatures who would make you believe they can read the moſt hidden decrees of fate in the grounds of coffee, tea, and chocolate! — I had often heard much talk of theſe conjurors, but not till I was convinced by the teſtimony of my own ſenſes, could ever be brought to believe, that perſons endowed with a liberal education, could deſcend ſo far as to liſten to their inconſiſtent prate, much leſs give credit to what they uttered. But ſo ſtrong is the deſire of looking into the ſeeds of time, eſpecially among the fair ſex, that ſometimes the moſt proud, as well as the moſt nice and delicate, will throw aſide all conſideration of

what they are, or would be thought, and for the ſake of being told their fortune, ſend for, careſs, and aſſociate themſelves with the very loweſt and moſt dirty wretches in human nature.

Lyſetta is deſcended from a very ancient and honourable houſe: — ſhe lived, till conſiderably turned on the wrong ſide of thirty, without diſcovering the leaſt inclination for marriage, much leſs gave any room for the moſt cenſorious ever to ſuſpect ſhe encouraged any private gallantries; and the whole tenor of her conduct was ſuch as no one could imagine her capable of harbouring any notions beneath the dignity of her birth and character. A long acquaintance gave me the privilege of viſiting her pretty frequently, and never was denied acceſs: — I was one day at her houſe when ſhe had no other company than a young lady with whom ſhe was extremely intimate; — while we were drinking tea, her woman came running into the room, and with a ſignificant tone of voice ſaid, — 'Madam, the woman you know of is below.' — 'Tis very well, replied Lyſetta, ſhew 'her into my chamber, and bid her ſtay a little; — then turning to her friend, they ſmiled on each other, nodded, winked, and ſeemed big with ſome ſecret between themſelves.

I found by all this, that my preſence might very well be ſpared at this time, ſo turned down my cup and took my leave. As I was going down ſtairs, I heard Lyſetta order herſelf to be denied to whoever ſhould come that evening; which convincing me of what I before had reaſon to imagine, that there was ſomething more than ordinary in hand, I reſolved, if poſſible, to fathom the myſtery. Accordingly I went home, popp'd on my Inviſible Belt, put my Tablets in my pocket, and returned with all ſpeed; — a lazy footman lolling againſt a poſt, with the door wide open behind him,

him, gave me an eaſy entrance into the houſe: — I very well knew the ſituation of Lyſetta's chamber, and went directly thither; but to my great mortification, found the ladies had bolted themſelves in, and all I could diſtinguiſh of what was doing, for ſome time, was only the hoarſe baſs of a loud laugh from Lyſetta, and the ſqueaking treble of a ſhrill tee-hee from the other.

I ſtood centinel, however, at the top of the ſtaircaſe, and at laſt was happily relieved. — Lyſetta opened the door, and call'd to her woman to bring clean cups. — Having gain'd admittance, I ſoon perceived what they were about, — a coffee pot upon the table, — the dregs of the liquor it had contained pour'd into a baſon, — ſeveral cups with more figures on the inſide than the outſide, and the yet recent circles they had left on being whelmed down on a damaſk napkin ſpread on one corner of the table, preſently informed me they were employed in the art and myſtery of conjuration. The prieſteſs of theſe farcical rights was a mean-habited, ill-look'd woman, and though not old, had her noſe ſaddled with a pair of ſpectacles, almoſt as big as the tops of the cups ſhe pretended to inſpect: ſhe was placed between the two ladies, who ſeem'd to treat her with the greateſt marks of freedom and civility.

Lyſetta, I found, had been ſo complaiſant to her friend, as to let her be firſt ſerved; but it was now her own turn, and freſh cups being brought, and the coffee-oracle having judiciouſly pour'd the quantity of a tea-ſpoonful into each, the lady took it into her hand, threw out the liquor, whelmed it on the cloth, and turned it round three times. All being concluded, the propheteſs took up the firſt with the moſt ſolemn air, look'd ſtedfaſtly into it, then on Lyſetta, and after having repeated

this ſeveral times, at laſt delivered her predictions in theſe terms:

Fortune-teller. I ſee a ring, madam; your ladyſhip will be married.

Lyſetta. 'Tis rather a mourning-ring; ſome of my kindred or friends perhaps may die.

Fortune teller. I can ſay nothing to that, madam, as yet; —but I am poſitive here is a wedding-ring, a heart juſt by it, and a little farther there is a great houſe with a high wall and a pair of gates; — your ladyſhip will have ſome gentleman that has a fine ſeat in the country; — it looks almoſt like a caſtle.

Lyſetta. I know nothing of it; but what elſe do you ſee?

Fortune-teller. Here is a man, madam, that ſeems to bring you money; — here are papers too, I do not know but they may be bills.

Lyſetta. Very likely; for I expect my banker here either to-day or to-morrow.

Fortune-teller. Then here is a bundle of ſomething brought to your ladyſhip's houſe.

Lyſetta. Oh, that is a new ſack I have making: — but is there nothing more?

Fortune-teller. Not in this cup, madam; —but I will look into the next.

Lyſetta. Do, for you have told me nothing of any conſequence.

Fortune-teller. There is a great deal here; madam, I can perceive already; here is a gentleman ſitting in an eaſy chair, leaning his elbow upon the table, and ſeems to be in a deep ſtudy.

Lyſetta. Piſh,— what's this to me?

Fortune-teller. Yes, madam, it is a great deal to you; for here is your ladyſhip, and the very ſame gentleman upon his knees before you: — you turn your head away, and look a little ſcornful; but he has you by the hand. — Bleſs me! here you are both

both together again, he is talking very earneſtly to you; — I never ſaw any thing ſo plain; — your ladyſhip may ſee it yourſelf.

In ſpeaking theſe laſt words, ſhe held the cup to Lyſetta, and with a pin pointed out the eyes, the noſe, and mouth of the pretended figure; but Lyſetta puſhed it from her, and ſaid,

Lyſetta. I could never ſee any thing in a cup in my life: — what ſort of a man is he?

Fortune-teller. Pretty tall, madam, well-ſhap'd, very genteel, has a fair complexion, and ſomewhat of a languiſhment in his eyes.

Lyſetta. I cannot recollect that I know any man who anſwers this deſcription.

Fortune-teller. I ſcarce think you do, madam, at preſent; but your ladyſhip may take my word for it, that you will ſee and be courted by ſuch a one; for there is a figure of three over his head, —it muſt be either in three days, or three weeks at fartheſt; — let me conſider; — aye, — the moon was at the full yeſterday; — this event muſt happen before ſhe enters into her laſt quarter; —but the next cup, it may be, will ſhew it more clearly.

With this ſhe took up the third cup, and had no ſooner juſt looked into it, than ſhe ſet it down again, clapp'd her hands together, and cry'd out,

Fortune teller. Bleſs me! now I am poſitive your ladyſhip will very ſoon be married; here is an altar, a book upon it, and a parſon, all as exact as if they were drawn by a pencil.

She then took up the cup again, and perceiving Lyſetta began to look a little more ſerious than ſhe had done, went on in this manner:

Fortune-teller. Well—this is wonderful indeed; — of all the cups I ever turn'd in my life, I never ſaw any thing like this; — here is your ladyſhip hand in hand with that ſaid gentleman who I told

you was in the other: — I would now ſwear that your ladyſhip will be a wife before any one imagines you have any thoughts that way.

Lyſetta. I have a very good opinion of your ſkill, yet I am certain you are miſtaken in this prediction; for to tell you the truth, I am reſolved never to marry.

Fortune-teller. Your ladyſhip may reſolve what you pleaſe, but if the ſtars reſolve the contrary, all your reſolutions will come to nothing; — madam, there is no reſiſting fate, this gentleman is ordain'd to be your huſband, and how much ſoever you may ſet yourſelf againſt it, the decrees of deſtiny are inevitable, and you muſt ſubmit.

Lyſetta. Oh, Heaven! whether I will or not!

Fortune-teller. Undoubtedly, madam,—there is notwithſtanding the ſuperior Powers, and thoſe things which we think the fartheſt removed from us, are frequently the moſt near at hand; ſo that deſign what you will, reſolve what you will, it is all in vain; your ladyſhip is ordained to be a wife, and the gentleman I ſee in theſe cups muſt be your huſband.

Lyſetta. Well, if ſuch a thing ſhould come to paſs, ſhall I be happy.

Fortune teller. There is nothing in the cup, madam, that ſhews the contrary.

The cups having been all examined, the propheteſs, after receiving a handſome gratuity for her trouble, took her leave, and left Lyſetta and her fair companion to reaſon between themſelves on the wonders of her art:— but my Chryſtaline Remembrance being now quite full, it is not in my power to relate the particulars of their diſcourſe; and can only ſay, that they both ſeemed to give an implicit credit to every thing ſhe had pretended to reveal.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Preſents the reader with a very fooliſh adventure of Lyſetta's, *to which all that was contained in the preceding chapter was only a prelude.*

HAVING diſcover'd this folly in Lyſetta, which before I could never have imagined, I began now to be cenſorious enough to ſuſpect ſhe might be alſo guilty of others, and therefore took it into my head to make her ſome Inviſible viſits, at thoſe hours in which it was likely her behaviour was moſt unguarded. In order to ſatisfy my curioſity, I went one morning, and found her buſy in looking over ſome new pamphlets juſt ſent her by her bookſeller. As I always thought the moſt certain way to form a true judgment of a woman's mind, was in knowing what ſort of reading ſhe moſt delighted in, I was glad to perceive that this lady made choice of only ſuch books as ſhewed her neither a wanton or a coquette, and returned all thoſe which by their titles diſcovered the leaſt tendency to prophaneneſs or obſcenity. After this ſhe began to open the leaves of one of them; but before ſhe had gone through half the leaves it contained, was interrupted by her footman, who brought her a letter, and ſaid, the perſon waited for an anſwer: — I ſlipp'd behind the chair while ſhe broke the ſeal, and the contents were as follow:

To the honourable LYSETTA.

May it pleaſe your ladyſhip,

MADAM,

'I Hope your goodneſs will pardon the liberty 'a ſtranger takes in writing to you; but as I am

'not ſo fortunate as to be acquainted with any 'perſon who can introduce me to your ladyſhip, I 'am obliged to become my own ſollicitor, and 'moſt humbly requeſt you will allow me the pri-'vilege of waiting on you this afternoon, if no 'previous engagement intervenes between me and 'my deſires, having ſomething to communicate 'of the utmoſt moment to the peace of him who 'has the honour to be, with the moſt profound 'reſpect,

'Your ladyſhip's ſincerely devoted ſervant,

'ORSAMES.'

Lyſetta ſeemed a good deal confounded on reading this little epiſtle; and after pauſing a while, argued with herſelf in this manner: Good God! 'if this ſhould be the man the fortune-teller told 'me of! ſhe ſaid I ſhould hear or ſee ſomething 'of him within three days, and this is but the 'ſecond ſince the prediction: — if I was ſure he 'was the perſon ſhe mentioned, I think I ought 'not to give him leave to viſit me, at leaſt not on 'his firſt requeſting it; — yet I ſhould be glad, 'methinks, to ſee if he any ways anſwers the de-'ſcription ſhe gave of him: — beſide, if I ſhould 'refuſe him, ſome accident or another would 'bring us together; for it is certain, there is no 'ſuch thing as diſappointing fate; — Why there-'fore ſhould I keep myſelf in ſuſpence? — no, I 'will ſee him, and hear what he has to ſay;—— 'it may be he may come upon ſome other buſi-'neſs than what I imagine, and then it would be vaſtly ſilly in me to avoid him. — Whoever 'he is, or whatever his deſigns are, it can be of 'no prejudice to ſee him once; — he cannot run 'away with me, — cannot have me againſt my 'will.'

She

She then call'd her ſervant, and bid him ſay that ſhe ſhould be at home. The fellow ran down, but had ſcarce time to deliver the meſſage he was charged with, before ſhe repented of it, as may be ſeen by this exclamation: 'Lord! what have I done! if he is really the perſon I take him to be, he muſt think me ſtrangely forward in ſo eaſily 'granting him admittance.'

While ſhe was ſpeaking this, ſhe ran to the ſtair-caſe with an intent to retract what ſhe had ſaid; but a ſecond thought witn-holding her, ſhe turned back into the room, and cry'd out, 'What a fool I am! — he does not know that I 'have conſulted a fortune-teller, nor that I have 'any reaſon to gueſs at the buſineſs that brings 'him hither; — Why therefore ſhould I ſhun 'him? — What ſhame can my ſeeing him reflect 'upon me? — it will be time enough to forbid 'his viſits, when he has declared himſelf my 'lover.'

How long ſhe would have continued in that mind is uncertain; — two ladies came in that inſtant to deſire her company with them to the Park, being a fine morning; to which ſhe conſenting, I left them, and went home, but with a full reſolution to return in the afternoon, and ſee what event the expected interview would produce. Accordingly I put on my Belt of Inviſibility, and went to the houſe of Lyſetta; — I ſaw a chair waiting, but the door was ſhut, and I was obliged to ſtay in the ſtreet a conſiderable time, before it was opened for any perſon, either to go in or out I got entrance at laſt, and paſſed directly to the dining-room, where I found the perſon I was deſirous of beholding. On my looking earneſtly on him, I ſaw he had ſo much the reſemblance of the picture drawn for him by the fortune-teller, that I preſently perceived ſhe muſt

be better acquainted with his features than the cups could make her, and that in reality ſhe was a marriage-broker, under the diſguiſe of a coffee-grounds calculator. He had placed himſelf very cloſe to Lyſetta, on a ſettee, and muſt have been making a declaration of love to her by the anſwer ſhe gave juſt as I came into the room.

Lyſetta. Sir, it does not become me to hearken to any profeſſions of this nature, from a perſon to whoſe family, fortune, and character I am ſo an entire ſtranger.

Orſames. It will be eaſy for me, madam, to give you full ſatisfaction in all theſe particulars; but till I can do ſo, I beg you will permit me, at leaſt, to convince you of my paſſion.

Lyſetta. Though, ſir, there is no room to doubt, either by your appearance or behaviour, but that you are a gentleman, and a man of honour, yet I ſhould be glad, methinks, to know ſome one perſon with whom you are acquainted.

Orſames. Unfortunately for me, madam, there is not a ſoul in this town who can give any account of me: — this, perhaps, you will think odd; but permit me to give a ſhort ſketch of my hiſtory, and you will ceaſe to wonder at it.

Lyſetta. Then, pray ſir, oblige me ſo far.

Orſames. It is no boaſt in me, madam, to aſſure your ladyſhip, that my family is among the number of the moſt ancient in England, having been ſettled here long before the conqueſt, and many of them been biſhops, judges, and privy counſellors; but my father taking ſome diſguſt at the meaſures in a late reign, reſolved to quit his native country for ever; and to that end ſold the ſeat of his anceſtors, with a very conſiderable eſtate in Somerſetſhire, and carried the purchaſe-money, together with his whole family, to Philadelphia, where he had then a brother, reputed the moſt wealthy merchant in

that

that place ;—it was there, madam, I was born, and am the only ſurviving iſſue of my parents, and conſequently the ſole heir of their poſſeſſions, as alſo of my uncle's, he dying without leaving any child behind him.—I fear I tire you, madam.

Lyſetta. No, ſir, I beg you will go on.

Orſames. From my very infancy there was ſomewhat in my nature which could not reliſh the manners of theſe Americans, tho' born amongſt them ; — I had read a great deal, and heard much concerning England, and had always a paſſionate deſire to come to it; but my father, even after my arriving at maturity, would never liſten to any intreaties on that ſcore: — after his death, my uncle was no leſs averſe to my removal; but on his demiſe, finding myſelf freed from all dependency, and entirely maſter of my own actions, I left all my effects to be diſpoſed of by a perſon whoſe integrity I am well aſſured of, and taking with me only a thouſand guineas, juſt for preſent uſe, embarked in the firſt ſhip that ſailed for England, where I happily arrived about ſix weeks ſince.

Lyſetta. But would it not have been better, ſir, that you had ſtaid at Philadelphia till your affairs had been ſettled?

Orſames. Not at all, madam; I have friends there that will manage for me as well as if I were there in perſon ; — beſides, an irreſiſtable impulſe hurried me to England :—I could not then account for my impatience, but am now convinced it was my guardian angel called me to behold in reality that lovely face I have ſo often ſeen in dreams.

Lyſetta. What! dream of me!

Orſames. Yes, madam, though ſo many leagues diſtant, my ſpirit has been often with you, converſed with you, and avowed that flame my mortal part now feels.

Lyſetta.

Lyſetta. Is it poſſible!

Orſames. True, by Heaven!

Lyſetta. And are you certain I am the ſame you ſaw in your ſleep?

Orſames. I could not be deceived: the firſt moment my eyes were bleſt with your preſence at the Chapel Royal, I forgot the ſolemnity of the place, and the pious buſineſs that had brought me thither.

Lyſetta. 'Tis very wonderful; — but 'tis time enough to talk of theſe things. — As you have related to me the former part of your life, I ſhould like to know in what manner you intend to regulate the future.

Orſames. That muſt be ſubmitted to my charming directreſs: — all my affairs, as well as my heart, muſt henceforth be at your diſpoſal: — I had thoughts, indeed, of purchaſing a ſmall eſtate, of about fifteen hundred or two thouſand pounds a year; — but whether I ſhould put the remainder of my fortune into the public funds, or lay it out on an employment at court, I had not yet determined.

Lyſetta. Oh, by all means buy a place:—the court is the only thing upon earth.

Orſames. Next to your company I believe it is; and ſince you approve the thought, ſhall infallibly purſue it.

Lyſetta. Whoever you marry, ſir, will doubtleſs be of my opinion.

Orſames. Ah! do not wrong my faithful heart ſo much as to imagine it capable of being charmed by any other. — No. if all my love, my ſervices, my prayers, ſhould fail to move the adorable Lyſetta, I vow an eternal celibacy.

Lyſetta. You men always talk thus when you would impoſe on the credulity of our ſex: —but, ſir, it is time alone that is the true touch-ſtone of ſincerity.

Orſames.

Orſames. Madam, it is, and to that I ſhall truſt the deciſion of my fate: — therefore, I once more implore your permiſſion to repeat my vows, and pay you the tribute which beauty like yours demands from love like mine.

Lyſetta. I will not hear ſo much of love; but as you are a ſtranger in town, and as yet have no acquaintance, I cannot be ſo ungenteel to refuſe you the privilege of viſiting me ſometimes.

At theſe words he threw himſelf upon his knees, and catching hold of both her hands, preſſed firſt the one and then the other to his lips with the greateſt appearance of tranſport; all which ſhe ſuffered, nor diſcovered the leaſt reluctance: — I know not how long he might have continued in this mute courtſhip, if the ſound of ſomebody at the door had not obliged him ſuddenly to riſe. It was Lyſetta's ſervant, who immediately entered and preſented her with two letters, which had been juſt left her by the poſt: — ſhe looked on the ſuperſcriptions, then threw them careleſly on the table, without ſhewing any impatience to examine the contents; but her lover, either thro' politeneſs, or becauſe he had acted enough of his part for the firſt time, thought proper to take his leave, ſaying, he would do himſelf the honour to wait on her the next day.

He was no ſooner gone, than ſhe began to give a looſe to thoſe agitations his preſence and diſcourſe had occaſioned, and which ſhe had not without great difficulty reſtrained from being viſible. It was in theſe terms ſhe expreſſed herſelf, which, incoherent as they are, I ſhall deliver to my readers, juſt as I found them the next morning engraved on my Tablets. 'Well this is the oddeſt acci-
'dent; ſure there was never any thing ſo aſto-
'niſhing! — let people ſay what they will, there
'is a great deal in the throwing of a cup, —
'that

'that woman is certainly the devil:—how exactly 'ſhe deſcribed this gentleman.—I have ſaid I 'would never marry, but if the ſtars have or-'dain'd it otherwiſe, it is in vain to reſiſt; and 'if his fortune be ſuch as he pretends it is, I can 'ſee no cauſe for any one to blame me.'

Here ſhe ſtopp'd, and fell into a little reſverie; but ſoon coming out of it, thus renewed her ejaculations: 'There is nothing in the perſon nor ad-'dreſs of this new lover, but what is perfectly 'agreeable; and I believe I ſhall like him well 'enough on a little more acquaintance with him: 'he ſeems vaſtly charm'd with me; but one ought 'not to build on what the men ſay on theſe occa-'ſions.—There is ſomething ſtrangely particular, 'indeed, in his dreaming of me without ever 'having ſeen me:—in fine, the more I conſider, 'the more I find the hand of fate is in this buſi-'neſs, and I muſt ſubmit.'

After this, ſhe ſeemed ſomewhat more compoſed, and began to read the letters ſhe had received:—I alſo look'd over them at the ſame time; but found they were only from relations of family affairs of no moment to the public, or to the narrative I am reciting. When I came home, had thrown myſelf into an eaſy-chair, and began to ruminate on the extraordinary ſcene I had been witneſs of, I knew not whether the baſe deſign, which I now plainly perceived had been concerted between the Fortune-teller and Orſames, or the weakneſs and infatuation of Lyſetta in giving credit to their romantic lyes, had the moſt right to engroſs my amazement. But when I reflected more deeply on the various impoſitions I daily ſaw practiſed, my wonder ceaſed, on account either of the fortune teller or the fortune-hunter, and fix'd it entirely on the ſimplicity of Lyſetta. It now ſeemed not ſtrange to me, that the moſt illiterate and abject wretches ſhould be endow'd

dow'd with a natural ſtore of cunning, which back'd by impudence, renders them capable of forming contrivances to deceive; elſe how do we often ſee pickpockets and houſe-breakers circumvent the watchfulneſs of the moſt cautious? but then thoſe ſort of pilferers rob us when our heads are turn'd another way, or when we are ſleeping in our beds: but in liſtening to fortune-tellers we are defrauded with our eyes open, and give, as it were, our own conſent to the worſt kind of theft, that of ſtealing away our underſtanding.

People guilty of this egregious folly, when detected in it, pretend they conſult thoſe ridiculous oracles for no other end than merely to divert themſelves, without believing, or even remembering one ſyllable of the predictions delivered to them. This, may, perhaps, at firſt be true; but there are too many inſtances which prove, that cuſtom, by degrees, turns into earneſt what might once be meant as a jeſt. The reaſon is this: Thoſe ſubtle creatures frequently find means, either by emiſſaries, or by inſinuating themſelves among ſervants, to get into the ſecrets of families, and one real fact ſerving to make all they ſay believed, gives them the power to work the perſon who depends upon them almoſt to any point they aim at. The moſt pernicious deſigns have been carried on this way. — Husbands have been ſet againſt their wives, and wives againſt their husbands; — parents have been made to diſregard their children, and children to forget all obedience to their parents; — the beſt matches have been broke off, and the moſt diſproportionable ones made:—in a word, there is no kind of miſchief but what has happened when a fortune-teller has been bribed by ſome baſe perſon, who has an intereſt in bringing about ſuch events. Therefore, as there is a ſtrict law in force againſt theſe pretended dealers in futurity, I cannot help ſaying,

that I regret its not being executed with greater punctuality; ſince the more ſimple an evil appears, the more dangerous it proves in its effects.

CHAP. IV.

Contains the cataſtrophe of an affair, which the repetition of ought not to give offence to any one, except the perſon whoſe reſentment the author will not look upon as a misfortune.

LYSETTA was ſo ſtrongly perſuaded in her mind, that it was her fate to marry Orſames, that ſhe made not the leaſt attempt to check the growing inclination ſhe had for him, but rather thought it a virtue in her to encourage the moſt tender ſentiments for a perſon ordain'd by Heaven to be her husband. I made ſeveral viſits to her, both in my Viſible and Inviſible capacity, and ſeldom went without finding Orſames there, and every time more free and degagé than before. — He made ſo ſwift a progreſs in his courtſhip, that in leſs than a month he became the Major-Domo of her family, commanded all the ſervants, and behaved as if already their maſter. To add to all this, Lyſetta ſuffered him to conduct her to all public places, ſat in the ſame box at the Play-houſe, and always dined and ſupp'd with her, whatever company were there:—in a word, they were never aſunder but in thoſe hours when decency obliged them to be ſo.

So ſtrange a revolution in the behaviour of Lyſetta made a great noiſe in the town: all her acquaintance were ſurprized; all her friends and kindred were much alarm'd at it; eſpecially as the perſon to whom ſhe ſhewed theſe extraordinary favours was altogether unknown, nor could they get

get the leaſt account of him. Thoſe, who either through a long converſation or affinity of blood, could take the privilege of diſcourſing with her on this head, did it in a very free manner; but the anſwers ſhe gave to their interrogatories were far from being ſatisfactory. When ſhe told them his hiſtory as he had related it, they treated it with contempt: — ſome ſaid that he was an impoſtor; — others more modeſt, that they wiſh'd he was not ſo:—to both which ſhe return'd, that whatever he were, ſhe was certain it was her fate to marry him, and deſir'd they would give themſelves no pain on that occaſion. As ſhe was naturally of a haughty, obſtinate diſpoſition, it is highly probable that the remonſtrances they took the liberty of making to her, rather ſtrengthen'd than abated her reſolution of giving herſelf to him. I was at her houſe one day, under cover of my Inviſible Belt, when I heard the following converſation between them:

Orſames. Condemn me not, my angel, for being ſometimes melancholy even in your preſence: — though you have promiſed to make me one day the happieſt of mankind, and I look upon every word of that dear mouth as unfailing as an oracle, yet when I conſider the length of time between me and the conſummation of my wiſhes, the impatience of my paſſion will not permit me to be gay.

Lyſetta. You men are always in ſuch a hurry in every thing you do.

Orſames. Ah, madam, 'tis a dreadful thing to have one's happineſs depend on the uncertain winds and waves; it may be yet two months before my effects can arrive from Philadelphia.

Lyſetta. And do you call that ſo long a time?

Orſames. A million of ages in the account of love, and even, according to common calculation, longer than human nature can ſuſtain continual torments;

torments; —eight whole weeks, ſix and fifty anxious days, and as many reſtleſs nights;—upwards of thirteen hundred hours of tedious expectation; and minutes almoſt numberleſs, waſted in pain, which might be paſs'd in pleaſure, if you would ſhorten the tremendous date.

Lyſetta. What would you have me do?

Orſames. Ah! if you loved, you need not be told, but of yourſelf generouſly bring the bleſſed event nearer to my wiſhes.

Lyſetta. You would not have me marry 'till your affairs are ſettled, and things can be done to our mutual ſatisfaction.

Orſames. I underſtand you, madam; the articles of jointure and pin-money, I know, are cuſtomary in modiſh marriages; but the paſſion you have inſpired me with is of too ſublime a nature to ſtoop to ſuch mean forms. I aſk not what your fortune is, but will ſettle the whole of mine upon you; —your lovely perſon is all the treaſure I am ambitious of preſerving;— the reſt ſhall be at your diſpoſal.

Lyſetta. This is kind indeed; but more than I deſire or would accept of.

Orſames. Oh! that you had no other fortune than your beauty;—then would the ſincerity of my love be proved, by endowing you with all that Heaven has made me maſter of. —— Alas! you know not how ardently, how faithfully I adore you.

Lyſetta. Yes, I am vain enough to think I have ſome ſhare in your affections.

Orſames. Some ſhare! — oh! could you be ſenſible of the thouſandth part of what I feel, pity, if not love, would compel you to eaſe my throbbing heart of the ſuſpence it labours under, and you would give yourſelf to my burning, bleeding paſſion.

Lyſetta.

Lyſetta. I have already ſaid I will be yours, and now again repeat it.

Orſames. But when, my angel!

In ſpeaking theſe words, he threw himſelf upon his knees before her, burſt into a flood of well-diſſembled tears, and graſp'd her Robe de Chambre with agonies which I cannot but ſay had much the appearance of reality, while in theſe terms he proſecuted his deſign:

Orſames. I have 'till now ſupported life but in the rapturous hope of being one day bleſs'd in your poſſeſſion: but even hope, by its uncertainty, becomes at laſt too weak an aid; and ſoon, very ſoon, my adorable Lyſetta, will you behold your faithful lover a cold breathleſs corpſe, unleſs the balm of your kindneſs recruits the vital lamp, and gives freſh vigour to my depreſs'd and breaking heart.

Lyſetta. I cannot bear to hear and ſee you thus: — riſe, ſir, this poſture does not become the man whom I intend to make my husband.

Orſames. No, by Heaven, I never will quit your feet but with an aſſurance of my happineſs. — Say then, — oh! ſay, when ſhall be the bliſsful day that makes you mine!

Lyſetta. Since it muſt be ſo, even when you pleaſe. No, hold, I had forgot myſelf.

Orſames. Oh, Heavens, what now?

Lyſetta. I promiſed a clergyman, my near kinſman, that if ever I married he ſhould perform the ceremony: he is at preſent out of town, but will return next Sunday, and on the Tueſday following it ſhall not be my fault if we do not attend him at the altar.

Orſames. Extatic ſound!—may I depend on the performance of this Heavenly promiſe!

Lyſetta. You may, and be entirely eaſy on that point; take now my hand, as an earneſt of my having

giving it you in a more ſolemn manner before a parſon: — henceforward I ſhall look upon myſelf as yours.

Orſames. Angel! Goddeſs! thus then let me ſeal the covenant on thoſe charming lips that has pronounced it.

Lyſetta. The covenant will not hold good in law without both parties interchangeably ſign their aſſent.

She utter'd theſe words with a moſt pleaſing ſmile, and at the ſame time threw her arms about his neck, and return'd the paſſionate ſalute ſhe had received from him, adding this tender expreſſion: 'My dear, dear Orſames, I do not now bluſh to 'confeſs to you, that from the firſt moment you 'declared yourſelf my lover, my heart correſponded 'with your vows, and told me what would be the 'event.' He affected too much tranſport on hearing her ſpeak in this manner, to be able to make any other reply than kiſſes and embraces, which, as ſhe was far from repelling, or ſeeming the leaſt offended at, I know not what advantages he might have taken, on finding her thus ſoften'd by his artifices, if a ſudden interruption had not, happily for her, broke off this dangerous entertainment. A footman came and told her, that her aunt, lady Gravelove, was come to viſit her; on which ſhe cry'd out with ſome peeviſhneſs, — 'Piſh,—Why 'did you not ſay I was from home?' Then turning fondly to Orſames, ſaid,

Lyſetta. Do you chuſe to join company with my aunt? or ſhall I fetch ſome books to amuſe you with 'till ſhe is gone?

Orſames. No, my deareſt love; — this lady has always look'd upon me with an unpleaſing eye, eſpecially of late, therefore will not offend her with my preſence; neither are my ſpirits enough compoſed, in the exceſs of joy you have inſpired me

me with, to read any thing with attention; — ſo will take a little walk.

Lyſetta. Do ſo, — but I ſhall expect you back to ſupper, — my aunt ſeldom ſtays longer than to drink tea, and I am ſure I ſhall not preſs her at this time.

No more was ſaid on either ſide; they embraced and parted, ſhe went into the next room, and he down ſtairs, in order to go where his buſineſs or inclination called him. As I never believ'd this fellow was what he pretended, I had taken ſome pains to diſcover the truth of his circumſtances, but without any ſucceſs, till it now came into my mind to follow him after he had left Lyſetta's houſe; which I did, reſolving not to loſe ſight of him till he ſhould return to her again.

He went directly to Drury-lane, walked very faſt, and never ſtopp'd till he came to the entrance of a narrow paſſage, between that place and Wild-ſtreet, where he ſtood ſtill, and looked round him, as I ſuppoſe, to ſee if any one was near who might know him, for the day was not yet quite ſhut in;— then paſs'd a little farther, look'd about him again, and finding the coaſt, as he thought, clear, none being in the alley but his Inviſible attendant, ſlipp'd haſtily into a little dirty alehouſe, where an old woman met him, and told him his friends were all above, on which he ran up ſtairs, and puſh'd open the door of a room, pretty ſpacious indeed, but had otherwiſe all the ſigns of beggary and wretchedneſs about it. Here we found five or ſix men, tolerably well habited, but had ſomething in their countenances which made me gueſs their occupation before they diſcovered it by their converſation; for they were no better than a gang of thieves and ſharpers; — they were ſitting round a table, with a great bowl of punch before them, when Orſames

ruſhed

ruſh'd in, and with a gay air accoſted them in theſe terms:

Orſames. Wiſh me joy, my lads, my hearts of ſteel, wiſh me joy; — I have gain'd my point; all is over, i'faith.

Firſt Man. What married!

Orſames. No, but as good as married: — the wench and her twelve thouſand pounds are as ſure to me, as if I had one in my arms and the other in my pocket; — Tueſday is the day, my buffs; but I muſt have more money, by G—! I have not a ſingle doit left.

Second Man. How! all the fifty pieces gone already!

Orſames. Ay, faith, and well laid out too: — I ſhall return it with intereſt; — you are all to ſhare in the money, and the woman too.—But come,— how ſtands ſtock among you?

Third Man. Curſed low; — tho' we have been all out to-day, we have not collected above thirty pieces, and four gold watches that muſt be knock'd to pieces, and the caſes melted down, or the makers names may betray us.

Fourth Man. The road grows worſe and worſe every day, I think.

Orſames. But you did get nothing from the ladies the fortune teller told you were to take the air this morning on Barnes Common?

Fifth Man. I ſhould have done ſo: but as the devil would have it, juſt as they were going to pull out their purſes, three gentlemen with fire-arms, came galloping towards us, and obliged me to make off without my booty.

Orſames. 'Twas damn'd unlucky.

Firſt Man. One meets with a thouſand ſuch diſappointments: — for my part I am half ſick of the buſineſs, and ſo I believe we are all.

Second

Second Man. Ay, faith; for what with ſeeing inn-keepers, coachmen, fortune-tellers, and other ſuch neceſſary informers, we have the leaſt part of the profit to ourſelves.

Third Man. Ay, I wiſh, Orſames, you were once married, that you might ſet up a gaming-table under the ſanction of your lady's name; — gaming is ten times a more profitable, as well as a more ſafer way of thieving.

Orſames. You know it was my bargain, and you may depend upon my honour that it ſhall be the firſt thing I will do.

Fourth Man. It will be a joyful day; for ſince taxes have been ſo high, and trade ſo low, ſuch numbers of ſhop-keepers are obliged to take the road, that we old practitioners can ſcarce get a living by it.

Orſames. Well, well, all this will be over in a ſhort time; —but you muſt raiſe me ſome caſh; — I can eaſily give you an account of the fifty pieces.

Fifth Man. No, no, it needs not; we know you would not ſink upon us.

Orſames. I chuſe, however, to do it: — the firſt article is five guineas to the fortune-teller, as an earneſt of the hundred ſhe is to receive after my marriage with Lyſetta: — the ſecond is twenty pounds for a gold ſnuff-box, which I pretended to have brought from Philadelphia and preſented to her ladyſhip: —the third is about ten more, ſpent in three ſeveral jaunts I made with her to Richmond, Windſor, and Greenwich: —the remainder, you may believe, might well be ſpent in donations to her ſervants, board-wages to my own man, paying my lodgings at two guineas a week, chair-hire, and other ſuch neceſſary expences.

Firſt Man. You could do no leſs.

Second Man. Ay, ay, — nothing of all this could have been ſpared.—But what ſum do you demand at preſent?

Orſames. I believe twenty pieces will defray the whole charges of the wedding, which is all I want; and afterwards, my boys, I ſhall have enough for you all.

On this every one turn'd out his pockets, and the ſum requeſted was immediately made up and laid upon the table, which Orſames put into his purſe; and then ſome diſcourſe enſued among this vicious company, which I chuſe to paſs over in ſilence, as it would be no fit entertainment for the chaſte ears of my fair readers. Orſames ſtaid with them about two hours, and then took his leave in order to ſup with Lyſetta, as ſhe had deſired he would; — I accompanied him not thither, but went home to my own apartment, more full of confuſion at the diſcovery I had made than I am able to expreſs.— Though I half deſpiſed Lyſetta for the follies I had ſeen her guilty of, yet when I reflected on her birth, and the character ſhe maintained in the world, I could not bear the thoughts of her becoming the victim of the baſe deſign concerted againſt her; and her fortune, reputation, and eternal peace of mind, the prey of ſuch a neſt of villains.

My whole ſtudy was now fully bent to ſnatch this unfortunate lady from that gulph of perdition ſhe was upon the brink of, and ſo near plunging into. I was extremely divided in my thoughts what to do upon this occaſion; to give her any hints concerning the dangers to which ſhe expoſed herſelf and reputation, by encouraging the addreſſes of a man whoſe character ſhe was ſo little acquainted with, I knew would be in vain, as ſhe had rejected all the warnings given her on that ſcore, and refuſed to liſten to the admonitions of her beſt friends

and

and neareſt kindred. —I had it in my power, indeed, to inform her of much more than any of them could even gueſs at; but then I could not relate the ſcene I had been witneſs of, without diſcovering at the ſame time the ſecret of my Inviſible Belt, which was by no means proper for me to entruſt her with.

To acquaint her by letter with what I knew concerning Orſames, and the villainous conſpiracy that had been formed to ruin her, I fear'd would be to a little purpoſe; and doubted not but ſhe would look upon an anonymous intimation only as a piece of malice, and treat it with the contempt it might ſeem to merit:—as this, however, was the only method I could take to ſave her, with any convenience to myſelf, I reſolved to purſue it; and accordingly wrote to her next morning a full account of all I had been witneſs of between Orſames and his wicked companions. I made this letter be left at her houſe before the time in which ſhe uſually got out of bed, to the end ſhe might have leiſure the conſider to contents, without being interrupted by any company coming in. As I was deſirous of ſeeing in what manner ſhe would receive this intelligence, I went under cover of my Belt, and gained entrance juſt as ſhe had finiſh'd the peruſal.

Her behaviour was ſuch as I apprehended it would be;—ſhe tore the letter,—ſtormed, and cry'd out, 'Was there ever ſo much impudence! 'Sure the perſon who ſent this infamous ſcrawl 'muſt have a very mean opinion of my under-'ſtanding to think I could give the leaſt credit 'to ſuch a vile aſperſion!——Orſames an im-'poſtor! a companion for thieves and vagabonds! '—ridiculous'—And then again: 'This muſt 'certainly be a contrivance of ſome of my wiſe 'kindred to break off the match:—I could find

'in my heart to ſend for Orſames and marry him 'this inſtant, to ſhew how much I deſpiſe their 'little malice;—but 'tis no matter, Tueſday will 'ſoon arrive, and that will put an end to all.'

I ſtaid a full hour, in the ſuppoſition that Orſames would make her a morning viſit; but finding, by ſome diſcourſe ſhe had with her maid, that ſhe did not expect him, and was making herſelf ready to go among the ſhops for things ſhe wanted, I quitted her apartment much diſconcerted at the ill ſucceſs of what I had done. However, as I had little elſe to employ my time that day, I went again in the afternoon; Orſames was now there, and two ladies of Lyſetta's particular acquaintance:—whether ſhe had mentioned any thing to him of the letter I cannot be certain, but am apt to think ſhe had not, for he appear'd with an alertneſs, which, by all I could diſcover, had nothing of conſtraint in it. Cards were called for, and they were juſt going to ſit down to whiſt, when word was brought Lyſetta, that her couſin, Capt. Platoon, was juſt arrived from Carliſle, and come to wait upon her; on which ſhe order'd him to be ſhewed up immediately. Orſames, who I perceived had turn'd pale as aſhes on hearing this gentleman's name, now roſe haſtily from his chair, and ſaid to Lyſetta, 'I 'have juſt thought of ſome buſineſs I had to diſ-'patch;—your ladyſhip muſt excuſe me;—the 'affair that calls me is of conſequence;—I cannot 'ſtay.'

She was going to make ſome reply, but the Captain came that inſtant into the room;—while he was paying his compliments to his couſin and the other ladies, Orſames had taken up his hat, and was endeavouring to ſlip out unperceived; but the quick-ſightedneſs of Lyſetta prevented him;—ſhe ran to him, and catching hold of his ſleeve, ſaid, 'You ſhall not go, at leaſt till I have pre-

'ſented

'ſented you to my couſin.' Then turning to the Captain ſaid, 'This is a gentleman, couſin, whoſe 'acquaintance, I believe, you will hereafter think 'yourſelf happy in.'

On this the Captain advanced with great politeneſs to embrace the perſon his kinſwoman preſented to him, but had no ſooner fixed his eyes upon his face, than he ſtarted back with the utmoſt aſtoniſhment, and cry'd out to Lyſetta:—'What is the 'meaning of this, madam?—Who would you 'introduce to me?' She was opening her mouth to make ſome anſwer, but Orſames, who was drawing as faſt as he could towards the door, hindered her from ſpeaking, by ſaying, with a heſitating voice: 'Madam,—the gentleman does not ſeem 'to deſire any new acquaintance;—I will wait 'on your ladyſhip another time.' In ſpeaking this he got to the top of the ſtair caſe, and it is likely would have made but one ſtep to the bottom, if the Captain had not prevented him, by running to him and catching faſt hold of him by the collar, dragg'd him back, ſaying at the ſame time; 'No, raſcal, 'you muſt not think to leave this place till you 'have confeſs'd what devil gave you the impudence 'to introduce yourſelf into ſuch company, and on 'what villainous deſign you are thus diſguiſed in 'the habit of a gentleman.' Then addreſſing himſelf to Lyſetta, who ſtood as motionleſs as if tranſfix'd with thunder, went on thus: 'Madam, by 'what means ſoever this villain has impoſed upon 'you, I do aſſure you, upon my honour, that two 'months ago he was a private man in Capt. Cut-'comb's company, and drum'd out of the regi-'ment for pig-ſtealing, and other miſdemeanors; 'for ſome of which, indeed, he ought to have 'been hang'd.'

On theſe words Lyſetta, ſcream'd out,—'Oh! 'Heavens!'—— and fell into a ſwoon;——the

Captain ſeeing this, quitted his priſoner to run with the two ladies to her aſſiſtance; and Orſames took this opportunity of making his eſcape. Proper means being applied, ſhe ſoon recovered, and the ſwelling paſſions which had occaſioned this diſorder, vented themſelves in tears: — the Captain appeared a little impatient to know how ſhe became acquainted with ſuch a wretch as Orſames; but ſhe told him ſhe was not then in a condition to inform him of the particulars; — ſaid, ſhe was very ill, and muſt lie down, and deſired to ſee him another time; — on which he took his leave, as did the two ladies, who knowing Orſames had profeſs'd himſelf her lover, and the encouragement ſhe had given him, I could perceive ſmiled within themſelves at the diſcovery. Thus was Lyſetta preſerved from ruin, and had no other puniſhment for her folly, than being laugh'd at by thoſe who were privy to the affair.—As for Orſames, I have ſince met him about town in a very ſhabby and tattered condition, the gang of villains, his aſſociates, I believe are diſperſed, and one of them has made his exit at Tyburn.

CHAP. V.

Treats on various matters, ſome of which, the author dares venture to aſſure the public, will hereafter be found not only more entertaining, but alſo of more conſequence than at preſent they appear to be.

I HAD been told, that lady Playfield's route was an aſſemblage of the moſt brilliant and polite perſons of both ſexes, and tho' I never had any great opinion of this ſort of meetings, yet I was tempted to go thither, in order to be myſelf a witneſs

neſs how far the deſcription that had been given me was conſonant to truth. As I am an entire ſtranger to her ladyſhip, and did not care for the formality of being introduced by any one who went there, I choſe to make this viſit in my Inviſible capacity. The great number of wax tapers, the ſparkle of the ladies jewels, and the extraordinary beauty of ſome among them, was dazzling to my eyes at firſt entrance; but I ſoon found that I had the ſame fault to find with this as I had done in all other mix'd company I ever ſaw; — a kind of hurry and confuſion, which deſtroys that ſolid converſation that is ſo agreeable, when only a few ſelect friends are met together. It was very near nine o'clock when I went thither, yet there were ſeveral who came in after me: — lady Playfield received all of them with her accuſtomed politeneſs; but for a great while there was nothing in the ſalutation on either ſide which engroſs'd my attention ſo far as to make me ſpread my Tablets to retain it.

I was, indeed, quite indolent to every thing that was ſaid, till the entrance of lady Allmode gave a little ſpur to my curioſity: — I had heard much talk of this lady, not only for her being extravagantly fond of every new faſhion, but alſo for a certain peculiarity in her manner of converſation, which made her admired by people of a low education, and as much laugh'd at by thoſe of a ſuperior. I had been told that ſhe had an utter averſion to plain Engliſh, and ſo thorough a contempt for what ſhe called the vulgar way of ſpeaking, that when ſhe talked, even on the moſt common things, ſhe interlarded all ſhe ſaid with the hardeſt words ſhe could pick out of the dictionary, and frequently coined new ones of her own which never were, nor ſcarce ever will be found in any vocabulary. Lady Playfield, I perceived, received her with a great deal of reſpect; — I was then at ſome di-

ſtance, but on finding they were entering into converſation, drew more near, to have an opportunity of hearing and improving myſelf, by a perſon of whom ſo extraordinary a deſcription had been given me. After the firſt compliments were over, lady Playfield addreſſed herſelf to her in theſe words:

Lady Playfield. Tho' I am always happy when I ſee your ladyſhip, yet now I can ſcarce forbear complaining of your unkindneſs in coming without miſs Arabella; — I hear ſhe has been in town above a week.

Lady Allmode. I could not have been guilty of ſo enormous a ſoleciſm in good breeding as not to have brought her to pay her duty to your ladyſhip, if there had been a poſſibility in nature to have done it.

Lady Playfield. I hope miſs is well, madam.

Lady Allmode. Perfectly ſo, madam, as to her health; but ſuch a ſight, ſuch a figure! a greater metamorphoſis than any in Ovid.

Lady Playfield. What does your ladyſhip mean?

Lady Allmode. Oh, madam, the remoteſt corner of the moſt deſart of the three Arabias never produced ſuch a creature, ſuch a Tramontane, as the Italians elegantly phraſe it. Well, theſe people, who live a great way from London, are ſuch abſurdians, ſuch awkwardites. Would your ladyſhip believe it, they ſent the girl home in a cap that quite covered the drum of her ears?

Lady Playfield. That might be to prevent her catching cold in the coach.

Lady Allmode. Oh, Jupiter! how am I ſurpriz'd to hear your ladyſhip talk in this manner! But this is not all, the girl had ſeveral new ſuits of cloaths when ſhe left London, made in the genteeleſt taſte; but my coutry aunt took it into her head, that we either had allowed too ſcanty a pattern, or that ſhe had outgrown them, out of mere goodwill and

ſimplicity

ſimplicity, has lengthen'd all her petticoats to ſuch a ridiculous ſize, that they almoſt come down to the buckles of her ſhoes;—I proteſt one can ſcarce ſee whether ſhe has any ancles.

On this a gentleman who ſtood pretty near, approached lady Allmode, and with a moſt ironical tone, replied to what ſhe had ſaid in theſe words:

Gentleman. Your ladyſhip muſt excuſe the miſtake your aunt has made; I fancy the faſhion of going half naked may not yet have reach'd ſo far as Wales.

Lady Allmode. You certainly ſpeak the rationale of the thing, ſir;—few of theſe mountaineers regard any thing but loading their tables with proviſions, feaſting their tenants, paying their debts, ſtanding up for their liberties of their country, and ſuch-like antiquated obſolete cuſtoms; — for my part, all my faculties are immerged in a profoundity of aſtoniſhment, to think that my aunt could marry and ſettle among ſuch aliens to politeneſs, ſuch heathens to the laws of good-breeding and the drawing-room.

Gentleman. Perhaps, madam, the cuſtoms and manners you mention were in vogue at the time of your aunt's marriage?

Lady Allmode. I proteſt, ſir, you have hit upon the ſolution of this enigma; — it was, indeed, in the reign of queen Anne that ſhe married.

I had ſeen enough of this fine lady, and did not chuſe to have my tablets crowded with any more of her unintelligible jargon, ſo retired to another part of the room, where I ſaw three ladies got together, and ſeemed very earneſt in diſcourſe; but little was I like to be the better for my near approach, for being on the topic of ſcandal, each was ſo full, and ſo highly delighted with the thoughts of it, that all ſpeaking at the ſame time prevented me from hearing diſtinctly what was ſaid by any

of them; and all I could gather at laſt, was that a certain lady of their acquaintance had been caught with her footman.

As I had been informed of the particulars of this ſtory before, the foible of the tranſgreſſing fair did not ſo much engroſs my meditations as the pleaſure of thoſe of her own ſex ſeemed to take in expoſing it, and I could not help ſaying to myſelf with the poet:

There is a luſt in man no charm can tame,
Of loudly publiſhing his neighbour's ſhame.
On eagles wings immortal ſcandals fly,
While virtuous actions are but born, and die.

But this was a place more proper to collect matter for reflection hereafter, than to indulge it at preſent; ſo I paſs'd on among the gaming-tables, which were eleven in number, and none of them unoccupied. Here it was pleaſant enough to obſerve the various attitudes of thoſe who played; and I think there is not a more ſure way of judging people's diſpoſitions than to ſee them at this diverſion: — ſome of thoſe who ſwept the ſtakes, received the favours fortune beſtowed on them with an eaſe and calmneſs, which ſhewed they had not been over anxious whether ſhe ſmiled or frowned; but there were many more who ſnatch'd up the glittering metal with a greedineſs which ſufficiently demonſtrated that avarice was the chief excitement to what they did. As for the loſers, it gave me an infinite ſatisfaction to ſee the unconcerned behaviour of ſome few among them; while others again filled me with a no leſs ſenſible diſquiet at their impatience. —I was aſhamed to find a gentleman of rank and fortune forget all politeneſs, and ſometimes even common decency, to thoſe who had his money in their pockets; and ſorry in my heart to

ſee

ſee a lady bite her lips, wrinkle her forehead with unbecoming frowns, diſtort every feature, and diſfigure all the charms that nature had beſtowed on her, for the loſs of what was not worth half that anxiety to preſerve. — 'Good Heaven! ſaid I to 'myſelf, if this be the effects of gaming, what 'madneſs is it to venture one's peace in that un-'certain gulph?'

The beautiful Iſmena was this night among the number of the unfortunates, but not of the impatients; I ſtood behind her chair, and ſaw her empty a well fill'd purſe, and take out of it even the laſt guinea with a ſmile. She was, indeed, a young lady lately come to the poſſeſſion of a very large fortune, and could not want what ſhe had thrown away; but the ſame might alſo be ſaid of Clarinda, who play'd at the ſame table with her, and had alſo loſt a conſiderable ſum to Sir Charles Fairlove, with whom theſe two ladies had been engaged the whole evening at picquet: —but ſee the difference, the latter of whom roſe from the table in a fury, tore her fan, and cry'd.

Clarinda. Curſe the cards, I will play no more this night, — that I am reſolved; — at leaſt not with Sir Charles.

Iſmena. Nay, madam, we have no reaſon to be angry with Sir Charles, for having done by us what we would gladly have done by him; — for my part, though he has ſtripp'd me of all I had about me, I am as good friends with him as ever.

Sir Charles. I hope ſo, madam, otherwiſe the good-luck I have had at play would prove the greateſt misfortune of my life.

Clarinda. The devil's in the cards to-night, I think; — I never loſt at picquet in my life before, — and now I have thrown away, — I cannot juſtly ſay how much, — but I'll ſee.

She then turned to the table, and pour'd out of a purſe what was remaining in it, and having counted the ſum, went on in the ſame heat as before.

Clarinda. Yes,—by Heaven! I thought ſo!—no leſs than ſix and twenty pieces.

Sir Charles. I ſhould be ſorry, madam, to give you any diſquiet on the ſcore of ſuch a trifle; but I can do no more than offer you a chance for regaining all you have loſt: —if you pleaſe, I will ſtake the whole againſt five of your's

Clarinda. I ſhould loſe that too, I ſuppoſe.

Iſmena. Venture it, however; if you loſe it, I'll be your halves, and ſend you the money to-morrow morning.

Clarinda. Well then, I will make one more eſſay.

With theſe words ſhe ſat down again; they play'd; ſhe was the winner, and now appeared as gay and happy as ſhe had lately been diſcontented, —Sir Charles ſmiled with ſome diſdain at this reverſe in her humour, and turning to Iſmena, ſaid,

Sir Charles. Now, madam, you muſt take up the winner.

Iſmena. You muſt give me credit then, ſir; you both know I have no ſtake to lay down.

Clarinda. You muſt excuſe me for that, madam, it may turn my luck; beſides, one has no heart to play when one does not ſee the money on the table.

Sir Charles. Well then, beautiful Iſmena, I will give you credit, —or if you pleaſe, will play upon the ſquare, my honour againſt your's.

Iſmena. With all my heart, Sir Charles.

The ill-nature, the ill-manners, and indeed the ingratitude of Clarinda, in refuſing to give the credit of a ſtake at cards, to a friend who had juſt before offered to pay half the loſſes ſhe ſhould ſuſtain in playing with another, made that young lady as diſagree-

diſagreeable in my eyes, as the ſweetneſs of diſpoſition and generoſity of the ſprightly Iſmena made her charming to a much greater degree than ever ſhe had appeared to me before, — all lovely, as it muſt be confeſs'd ſhe is;—but to proceed: Iſmena having accepted the challenge of Sir Charles, ſhe tried once more what chance would do for her;—chance was ſtill againſt her, and Sir Charles again the conquerer; the game being over, ſhe ſaid laughing:

Iſmena. Well, I may now ſing — Fortune is my foe,—and content myſelf, for the remainder of the night, in being an humble ſpectator, ſince I am not in a condition to play myſelf.

Sir Charles It will be your own fault then, madam, if you are; I believe I have an hundred and ſome odd pieces about me, which are all at your ſervice?

Iſmena. I thank you, Sir Charles; but I do not chuſe to riſque ſo much at one ſitting: I do not care, however, if I become your debtor for twenty pieces.

Sir Charles. You do me a pleaſure, madam, in accepting any part of the offer I made you;—there is the trifle you mention, if you want more, I beg you will command it.

Iſmena. No, ſir, I am determined to play no farther than this; I am much obliged to you for the favour, and will return it to-morrow morning.

Sir Charles. There is no occaſion, madam; I have buſineſs your way to-morrow morning, and if you permit me that honour, will wait on you about twelve.

Iſmena. You may depend, ſir, on my being at home.

Clarinda, who had not open'd her mouth all this time, no ſooner ſaw her fair friend receive the money, than ſhe laid her hand on hers, and with a

gay

gay air ſaid to her: 'Now, my dear, I am ready 'for you, if you pleaſe, and willing to venture as 'much with you as you have borrowed of Sir 'Charles.' To this Iſmena replied, with more ſerioufneſs than ſhe was wont to put on: 'No, 'madam, I have been very unlucky here, and am 'reſolved to change hands; I ſee lady Longmore 'has given out at the whiſt table yonder, I'll go 'and take her place.

With theſe words ſhe roſe haſtily from her ſeat, and did as ſhe had ſaid: Sir Charles follow'd her to the other table, and ſtood behind her chair till he ſaw her win more than the ſum he had lent her. On the company's breaking up, ſhe look'd round the room for Sir Charles, in order, as I ſuppoſe to return the money to him; but if ſhe had any ſuch deſign he had taken care to prevent it, by leaving the place before ſhe had done playing. This action of Sir Charles, joined to ſome amorous glances I had perceived him to regard her with, made me ſuſpect he had ſome farther view than meer complaiſance in what he had done; but as he was generally accounted a man of honour, and ſhe had an unblemiſhed character, I ſuſpended my judgment till I ſhould ſee the event of the viſit ſhe promiſed to receive from him the next morning.

After I had quitted this ſcene of gay confuſion, as Mr. Addiſon elegantly expreſſes it, and had time to ruminate on the tranſactions that evening had preſented me with, Sir Charles and Iſmena ran very much in my head, but did not ſo totally engroſs my attention, as to make me negligent to all others:— I had heard ſeveral of the aſſembly ſay to each other, that miſs Allmode was a moſt beautiful young creature, and would certainly be the reigning toaſt of the town if not ſpoiled by the affectation of her mother; and this diſtinct deſcription gave me a curioſity

rioſity both to ſee the girl, and in what manner her ſelf-ſufficient ladyſhip behaved towards her. Accordingly I laid down a plan for my progreſſion the next morning, which was this: — to go to lady Allmode's early, and from thence to Iſmena at the time Sir Charles had appointed.—I then began to remember that the night was far advanced, went to-bed, as it is probable ſome of my readers may find it neceſſary to do at that time.

CHAP. VI.

Contains ſuch things as are not often to be met with, neither in the one nor the other ſex; yet are, or at leaſt ought to be, equally intereſting to both.

I ROSE next morning more early than I had been accuſtomed to do, in order to prepare for my two viſits; but in ſpite of all the expedition I could practiſe, I found myſelf obliged to poſtpone either the one or the other 'till another day. So much time was elapſed, firſt in tranſcribing what I had ſeen at lady Playfield's, and then in getting the dialogues engraved on my Tablets expunged by the pure fingers of my yet unpolluted virgin, that when all was ready, the clock wanted but few minutes of twelve. I heſitated not whether I ſhould go to lady Allmode's or to Iſmena; for being prepoſſeſs'd in favour of the latter, I went thither in a lucky time,—Sir Charles Fairlove was juſt ſtepping out of his chair, — I followed him up ſtairs, and Iſmena received him with great gaiety, accompanied with an equal air of modeſty:—as ſoon as they were ſeated, ſhe ſaid to him:

Iſmena. Your money was very fortunate, Sir Charles, I did not loſe one guinea after I became your borrower.

Sir.

Sir Charles. Madam, I congratulate myſelf for being ſo happy to ſerve you, tho' on ſo inſignificant an occaſion;—but ſhould be better pleaſed to have it in my power to do ſo in much greater things.

Iſmena. I doubt not of your generoſity, and if ever I am reduced to the ſame exigence again, it is likely may have recourſe to the ſame hand; in the mean time, Sir Charles, let me return the favour you have already conferred upon me.

Sir Charles. This trifle, madam, is neither worth your returning nor my receiving, nor ſhould I have ever thought on it, if I had not given you credit on an infinitely more valuable account.

Iſmena. Credit! As how, Sir Charles?

Sir Charles. Yes, madam, a debt I am too impatient to wait long for the payment of, and am come to claim.

Iſmena. You rally well, Sir Charles; but as I cannot comprehend the purport, am not prepared to give an anſwer.

Sir Charles. No, i'faith, madam, you will find me extremely ſerious; ſure you cannot be ſo ſtrangely forgetful as not to recollect what you loſt to me laſt night at play?

Iſmena. I loſt nothing but what I paid, Sir Charles.

Sir Charles. Nothing, madam?

Iſmena. No, upon my honour.

Sir Charles. You have named the very thing,—your honour, madam;—when a lady ventures her honour at a gaming-table, and is ſo unlucky to loſe, ſhe muſt expect to pay the forfeit.

Iſmena. What do you mean, Sir Charles?

Sir Charles. My meaning needs no explanation, madam;—you loſt your honour to me, and I now demand the immediate poſſeſſion of what I fairly won.

Iſmena. Ridiculous.

Sir

Sir Charles. Madam, the contempt you treat my pretenſions will not take away the validity of them; what was once your honour, is now no longer ſo, but mine, and at my diſpoſal; and you would not, ſure, go about to defraud me of the goods that fortune has beſtowed upon me?

With theſe words he threw his arms about her waiſt, with a freedom which ſhewed he indeed looked upon her as his own: ſhe ſeemed a little alarmed at this action, and ſtarting from him, endeavoured to repulſe the temerity he was guilty of, by ſaying to him:

Iſmena. Forbear; this fooling is offenſive.

Sir Charles. Madam, this coyneſs is trifling; I am ſurpriſed you will oblige me to have recourſe to force for what is ſo much my due, and I ſhould ſet a higher value upon if chearfully reſign'd.

He then catched hold of her a ſecond time, and made an offer to bear her into another room;—the graſp he had taken of her was not ſo ſtrenuous, however, but that ſhe eaſily diſengaged herſelf; and having done ſo, cried out with a voice and air full of the extremeſt diſdain.

Iſmena. 'Till this action, I ſcarce could think you were in earneſt:—Baſe, preſuming man, how dare you entertain thoughts ſo unworthy of me!

Sir Charles. How dare you, madam, hazard on the chance of a game at cards what ſeems ſo precious to you?

Iſmena. Oh, deſpicable!—to turn that into a matter of ſerioufneſs which was only meant in jeſt!

Sir Charles. We men, madam, take all the advantages we can when we play with a fine woman; and you may be aſſured I ſhall not eaſily be prevailed upon to relinquiſh thoſe I have gained over you.

Iſmena. The vain idea will little avail your vile purpoſe.

Sir

Sir Charles. You may be miſtaken, madam; the laws of Weſtminſter-Hall, indeed, will ſcarcely take any cognizance of an affair of this nature, but thoſe laws by which the polite world are govern'd, I mean the laws of gaming, will infallibly give it on my ſide:—that pride of your's will be humbled, when you ſee your ſtake of honour become the public jeſt, and all that paſſed between us the ſubject of a news paper.

Iſmena. I am confounded!— you cannot certainly be the monſter you appear!

Sir Charles. I would not wiſh you, madam, to put me to the proof.

Iſmena. Oh, Heavens!—to what has one unguarded word expoſed me!

She could not utter this exclamation without letting fall ſome tears, which I perceived had a great effect on Sir Charles, by the change it occaſioned in his countenance; he affected, however, to take no notice of it, and reſuming his former boldneſs, went on:

Sir Charles You ſee, madam, how it is; you are entirely in my power, and if I cannot have my agreement, I will have my revenge, or at leaſt an equivalent for both.

Iſmena. What equivalent!

Sir Charles. You muſt redeem your forfeited honour by a ſum of money.

Iſmena. Name it then.

Sir Charles. Let me conſider, madam,—a woman's honour, as times now are, and beauty renders itſelf ſo cheap, will bear but a low price at the market; but as you are well-born, well accompliſh'd, are extremely handſome, and have more perfections than moſt of your ſex can boaſt of, I think five hundred pounds is the leaſt I can demand.

Iſmena. You ſhall have it, ſir.

With

With this ſhe ran haſtily to a little cabinet that ſtood in the room, and having taken from thence what ſhe wanted, turn'd again to the table, ſaying,

Iſmena. Thoſe two Bank-bills, ſir, contain the ſum you mention, — take them, and eaſe me of your preſence.

Sir Charles. I muſt firſt examine, madam, if they are genuine: yes they are right; and now, methinks, 'tis pity to rob you of ſo much money, five hundred pounds will purchaſe five hundred pretty trinkets, and I cannot receive it without feeling ſome concern.

Iſmena. Oh, you need be under no concern on that ſcore;—were it five times the ſum, I would gladly give it to be rid for ever both of you and your impudent demand.

Sir Charles. Yet, in ſpite of all this ſeverity, I ſhall willingly reſtore theſe bills on one condition.

Iſmena. Sir, I ſhall make no conditions with you; therefore be gone and leave me.

Sir Charles. Not, 'till you have heard me, madam:—the condition I would ſtipulate is only this, that you will make a ſolemn promiſe never to play again, except for mere diverſion, with ſome ſelect friends who you are certain will take no ungenerous advantage of you.

Iſmena. There is little occaſion for me to bind myſelf by a promiſe to avoid a thing which has already proved ſo miſchievous; the inſults I have received from you will make me deteſt the ſight of cards, and fly the ſociety of all who purſue that dangerous amuſement.

Sir Charles. It is enough; my ends are anſwered; and thus, on my knees, let me reſtore your bills, and with them a heart which has long been devoted to you, and never harbour'd a wiſh to your diſhonour.

Never

Never had I known greater anxiety for any thing not relating to myſelf, or my particular friends, than I did for the iſſue of his converſation; — I had been extremely ſcandalized at ſome part of Sir Charles's behaviour; yet, by many indications, could not ſet him down in my mind for the mercenary villain he affected to be; and was now as much rejoiced to ſee a likelihood of not having been deceived in my conjectures in his favour, as the reader will preſently be convinced. Iſmena, being too much amazed at this ſudden turn to make an immediate reply, he went on thus,— ſtill kneeling:

Sir Charles. Oh, Iſmena; forgive the ſeeming brutality I have been guilty of; I counterfeited the libertine, the villain, only to ſhew you there was a poſſibility for you to have met with ſuch a one in reality; and aſſumed the moſt odious character, in order to render your's more truly amiable: the tender paſſion you inſpired me with has made me keep a watchful eye over all your actions; — I found you perfect in every thing except a too great readineſs to follow the example of others in the deſtructive love of play;—I know the dangers to which your ſex are expoſed by it, and that there were many ſnares ſpread for your innocence in particular; by this means even laſt night there were ſome in company who wanted but the ſame opportunity I had to behave as I have done, though with far different views. Oh! pardon, therefore, the only ſtratagem I couldthink of to clear your mind of a propenſity which might in time have ſullied all its brightneſs.

Iſmena. Riſe, Sir Charles; the diverſity, I might ſay, indeed, the perplexity of my thoughts hindered me, 'till now, from obſerving the poſture you were in; pray be ſeated, ſir.—If I may give credit to your words, I am infinitely obliged to you for

for the care you took of my reputation, when you ſaw it totally neglected by myſelf.

Sir Charles. No, madam, ſay not ſo;—I dare believe you have never failed in a due regard for reputation, and am certain that the breath of ſlander has never preſumed to blaſt it; and I could not mean to reproach you for any thing that has been, but to warn you againſt what might be:—an immoderate inclination for gaming in your ſex, I take to be the ſame as an immoderate inclination to drinking is in ours, both are equally intoxicating and deſtructive to right reaſon; they make the brain grow giddy, incapable of reflection, or any other purſuit than the darling folly, and they run headlong on, invelop'd in a miſt of errors, where fortune, fame, and peace of mind are ſometimes irrecoverably loſt.

Iſmena. Oh, Sir Charles, you have opened my eyes to ſee what my inadvertency might one day have plunged me in.

Sir Charles. I know very well, madam, you wanted only to be reminded of the danger, to enable you to avoid it; — the manner in which I have done ſo may have, perhaps, appear'd too preſuming; but I fear'd more gentle methods might not have had the effect.

Iſmena. Make no apologies, Sir Charles, — I am now convinced you meant me well, and I thank you for it.

Sir Charles. If you accept it as a proof of friendſhip, it may in time engage you to believe that a ſincere and tender friendſhip in a perſon of my ſex to one of yours deſerves a ſofter name, and call it love.

Iſmena. We will not cavil about names, but muſt acknowledge, Sir Charles, by what motive ſoever you have been actuated, the benefit is mine.

Sir

Sir Charles. How bleſs'd am I in this confeſſion! But, charming Iſmena, may I not be permitted to wait on you ſometimes, and have leave to hope the ſervices I ſhall hereafter pay will not be rejected.

Iſmena. I flatter myſelf with being able to regulate my future conduct ſo as not to give you occaſion to offer any of that frightful ſort you have done this morning; and if I ſhould relapſe into my former errors, could neither expect nor deſerve you ſhould take the ſame trouble for my reformation.

She ſpoke theſe words with ſo obliging a ſmile, that Sir Charles could not forbear teſtifying the tranſport he was in by imprinting ſeveral paſſionate kiſſes on one of her hands; after which, looking on her with an equal mixture of tenderneſs and reſpect, he ſaid,

Sir Charles. Incomparable Iſmena! how impoſſible is it for me to expreſs either what you deſerve, or what I feel in a full ſenſibility of your perfections!

Iſmena. I deſire you will not go about to expreſs either the one or the other;—the only merit I can boaſt of is in being ſo early convinced of my fault, and that I am ſo is wholly owing to yourſelf;—for I confeſs to you, Sir Charles, that though it is but lately I have begun to like play at all, yet by converſing with thoſe who ſeem to have no other way of paſſing their time, it grew by very ſwift degrees more pleaſing to me; and I believe that it would, in time, have become ſo habitual to me, that I ſhould have expected the hour of ſitting down to cards as naturally as that of ſitting down to dinner;—but in the mirror you have preſented to me, I now ſee, that to indulge this amuſement to an exceſs, is not only a folly below the dignity of a thinking mind, but alſo a kind of Scylla or Caribdes, formed by ourſelves in the ocean of life, as if on purpoſe to wreck our fortunes, honour, reputation, and every thing that is dear.

Sir

Sir Charles. Oh, madam! every word you ſpeak on this occaſion thrills me to the very ſoul; I am charm'd, I am raviſh'd to find in you ſuch ſolid reaſon, ſuch an amazing quickneſs of apprehenſion.

Iſmena. You are relapſing into the panegyric ſtrain; but I will hear no more of it:—you muſt give me leave to play the monitor in my turn,—I have been your convert, and you muſt now be mine;—remember, Sir Charles, that to liſten to the tongue of flattery, is no leſs pernicious than the folly you have taught me to be aſham'd of.

Sir Charles. I grant it, madam; but the juſt praiſes of real virtue cannot cauſe a bluſh either in the face of the giver or the receiver.

Iſmena. Well, I find you will have the better of the argument, whether the tenet you take upon you to maintain be right or wrong; therefore to put an end to it, What think you of a turn or two in the Mall this morning?

Sir Charles. Madam, I ſhall be happy to attend you any where.

She then called for her capuchin and little muff, which being immediately brought, Sir Charles gave her his hand to lead her down ſtairs, and I retired to my apartment.

I had met with nothing a great while that gave me a more ſenſible ſatisfaction than to find a lady, in all the pride of blooming youth, beautiful, gay, and ſurrounded with a crowd of flatterers, bear with ſo much chearfulneſs the conviction of her error, and teſtify ſo much gratitude to the perſon to whom ſhe was indebted for her reformation. The rough method he had taken for this purpoſe, was ſo far from raiſing any reſentment in her, after once knowing the motive, that ſhe look'd upon him as her beſt friend, eſteemed, and loved him for

it;

it; — conſcious that it required no leſs than ſuch a proceeding to rouſe her from that thoughtleſſneſs which alone could have made her fall into an error, the danger of which ſhe might otherwiſe have too late perceived.

I thought I had diſcovered ſomething in theſe two accompliſh'd perſons, that ſeemed to me as if Heaven had ordained them for each other, and I ſoon found I had not been miſtaken; — they are now marr ed with the higheſt approbation of all friends on both ſides; and in the opinion of as many as have the pleaſure of their acquaintance, bid fair to be one of the moſt happy pairs that ever enter'd into Hymen's bands.

CHAP. VII.

The Author has been in ſome debate within himſelf, whether he ſhould inſert or not, as he is conſcious it will be little reliſh'd by the faſhionable genteel part of his readers.

THERE is ſomething very unaccountable in an over-curious diſpoſition; — it makes us eager, impatient, anxious, indefatigable in prying into things which promiſe us not the leaſt pleaſure in the diſcovery of when known:—a reader who has not this propenſity in his nature, will doubtleſs think, by what I ſaid of lady Allmode in the fifth chapter, that I had already ſeen enough of her behaviour to keep me from being deſirous of ſeeing more. But as every one is willing to find ſome excuſe or other, even for the ſillieſt things he can be guilty of, ſo I thought, that in being a ſpectator of lady Allmode's conduct in her own family, and the manner in which ſhe train'd up her daughter, ſomething might preſent itſelf

itſelf to me that would more than compenſate for the time I ſhould expend in going to her houſe.

Accordingly I went, and gain'd an eaſy acceſs, the door happening to be open juſt as I reach'd it, to let out a footman in a gay livery, who had come to deliver ſome meſſage; but was a good deal bewildered on my entrance, as I had never been in the houſe before, and was entirely unacquainted with the ſituation of any of the rooms: the meaſure of time is always doubled when we wait for an event with impatience,—I remain'd not long, however, in this dilemma, a ſervant running haſtily up the back ſtairs, with ſome drinking glaſſes on a ſilver waiter in his hand, I followed him into a room where a woman, who by her appearance I gueſs'd was her ladyſhip's Abigail, received from him what he had brought, and carried it into an inner chamber, the door of which ſhe ſhut after her, but not ſo ſuddenly as to prevent my entering with her.

Here I found lady Allmode; but had ſhe appear'd to me in any other place, ſhould never have known her for the ſame I had ſeen at lady Playfield's route;—ſo vaſt a difference is it in the power of art ſometimes to make. At the time of my coming in ſhe was under the operation of having her eyebrows ſhaped with a ſmall pair of pincers, by one of thoſe perſons who go by the name of Tyre-women; but, in my opinion, ought rather to be call'd face-menders, ſince their buſineſs is not ſo much to ornament the head as to rectify the defects of the features. The important work being over, lady Allmode turn'd to a magnifier that ſtood upon her toylet, to ſee if all was right, and having looked into it, cried out haſtily:

Lady. Oh, Mrs. Prim, ſure your eyes are in eclipſe to-day! you have left no leſs than three exuberant hairs on my right brow, and I think arch'd it ſomewhat higher than the other.

Mrs. Prim. I beg pardon of your ladyſhip, but I will preſently remedy that error. — On this the artiſt employ'd her little inſtrument for a ſecond eſſay; after which lady Allmode look'd in the glaſs again, and ſaid,

Lady. It is very well now; but I look wretchedly to-day, and it is no wonder: What do you think, Mrs. Prim? that careleſs oaf there put me to bed laſt night without my Sperma-Ceti mask.

Mrs. Prim. That was a great omiſſion, indeed, madam; but your lady muſt forgive it, Mrs. Pinup does not uſe to neglect theſe things.

Pinup. I am very ſorry for it, Mrs. Prim; but it was ſo late when her ladyſhip went to bed; and her ladyſhip was ſo ſleepy.

Lady. And your fooliſhip ſo ſleepy too, I ſuppoſe. But that is not all, Mrs. Prim, the creature threw it into ſome corner or other where Veni got at it, and this morning it was found half devour'd.

Pinup. Your ladyſhip knowsI have almoſt cried my eyes out about it, and that I offer'd to beſpeak another, and pay for it out of my own pocket.

Lady. Pay for it, ideot.—But tell me, creature, what atonement can'ſt thou ever make for theſe depredations on my countenance? Here I ſhall loſe a whole day; for 'tis impoſſible I can think of appearing in public.

Mrs. Prim. I dare anſwer for Mrs. Pinup, that ſhe will never be guilty of the like fault again; therefore I beg your ladyſhip will forgive her.

Lady. Yes, yes,—I have forgiven her, and I do forgive her; but ſhe muſt expect to be told of it ſometimes: if ſhe had lived with ſome ladies, they would have turn'd her out of doors that inſtant;—*mais toujours les douceurs du cour* lay an embargo on my indignation.

Pinup. Your ladyſhip is all goodneſs.

Lady.

Lady. Well, well, ſay no more about it: — I am ſorry I ſtruck you; but take the Dreſden ſuit I had on yeſterday, and let me ſee you in it.

Pinup. I humbly thank your ladyſhip.

Lady. Say no more of it. Oh, *mon Dieu!* I begin to feel the effects of my diſconcertion; — every membrane through my whoſe frame has a pulſation in it; — give me ſomething to take this inſtant, or I ſhall faint. But as to the Sperma-Ceti maſk, is it not poſſible for you to get one ready for me before I ſleep, elſe my face will be a perfect nutmeg-grater by to-morrow morning.

Mrs. Prim. Oh, your ladyſhip need be under no apprehenſions on that ſcore; I always keep ſeveral; they want only ſprinkling with a little Orange-flower water, to take off the ſcent: — I will ſend your ladyſhip one this afternoon. Has your ladyſhip any farther commands?

Lady. Yes, you may ſend me a box of red for my cheeks; but do not let it be quite ſo high-colour'd as the laſt.

Mrs. Prim. I ſhall take care to mix it ſo as to pleaſe your ladyſhip. In ſpeaking this, ſhe made her exit with abundance of low curtſies.

Pinup was returning to her lady's chamber, but met her juſt coming out, in order to paſs into another room, on ſeeing her ſhe ſaid to her:

Lady I think this girl takes a long time in dreſſing; go and ſee if ſhe is ready, and bid her come to me.

Finding now that there was ſome probability of my ſeeing the young lady, which had been, indeed, the chief motive of my going thither, I attended lady Allmode where ſhe went, and placed myſelf in one corner of the room; where I did not wait above three or four minutes before Pinup, who had gone immediately on her errand, return'd leading Miſs Allmode. She ſeem'd to be about fourteen years of age; her face was extremely pretty, and I

believe nature had given her a ſhape no leſs excellent, if it had not been deform'd by her ſtay-maker. On her approach, lady Allmode took her by the arm, turn'd her round ſeveral times, and examin'd her whole dreſs from head to foot; after which, looking very well pleas'd, ſhe ſaid:

Lady. Ay, miſs, now you look like what you are: — I proteſt, I ſcarce knew you for my own child, in the obſolete condition you came from the country. — Are you not highly delighted with yourſelf.

Miſs. No, indeed, madam; I think ſince 'tis the faſhion to have one's cloaths made in this manner, there ought to be as many chimnies in a room as there are chairs.

Lady. Sure, miſs, you are not cold?

Miſs. It would be very ſtrange, madam, if I were not, when my ſtays are ſo contrived that the air comes down to the very bottom of my back, and below the pit of my ſtomach; and my petticoats ſo ſhort that I am every minute fancying I have tuck'd them up in order to have my legs and feet waſh'd:—then as to my ears, I do declare I feel the wind blow from the one to the other, and pierces into my very brain.

Lady. Oh, fye, miſs; this being in the country has ſpoiled you: — whatever is the faſhion is never either too cold or too hot.

Miſs. I muſt beg your ladyſhip's pardon; for I I am certain this faſhion is a great deal too much of both, — the tightneſs of my ſleeves, the load of flounces at my elbow, and the huge ſemi-circles, as heavy as panniers, hanging on each hip, make ſome parts of me ſweat while all the reſt are freezing.

Lady. Oh hideous?—frightful! — ſweat! —— what a word is there from the mouth of a fine young lady! Whenever you have occaſion to complain of too much warm, you ſhould always ſay,

I per-

I perſpire: — but I am ſurpriſed you ſhould not be charm'd with ſo becoming a dreſs.

Miſs. I feel uneaſy, and quite uncomfortable, madam.

Lady. A little uſe will reconcile you to it — Without vanity, miſs, you are exceeding handſome; and now I have made you fit to appear in public, the praiſes that will be given you, and the fine things ſaid to you, will raiſe ſuch a gaiety *du cœur*, as will make you forget all that you call uncomfortable,

Miſs. I ſhould be glad, madam, if any thing would do that.

Lady. You muſt learn to know yourſelf, miſs; look in the glaſs; you have fine eyes, a very lovely mouth, a well-turn'd face, a delicate complexion, good hair; in fine, you are a complete beauty:—but what is beauty without the poſſeſſor underſtands how to manage it to advantage? a milk-maid may be a beauty, and no one take any notice of her;— you muſt practice the art of diſplaying every charm, and rendering yourſelf conſpicuous.

Miſs. Indeed, madam, I am quite ignorant of theſe things.

Lady. I perceive you are, miſs; but that is not your fault: my formal aunt has never given you any inſtructions in this point, I ſuppoſe; — a few leſſons, however, will ſoon put you in the way to make the moſt of what nature has beſtow'd upon you.—In the firſt place, miſs, you muſt be ſure to thruſt out your chin as far as you are able:—when you come into a room always let your chin be the firſt thing ſeen of you, as if it were the harbinger of the reſt of your perſon.——Secondly, you muſt never keep your two hands together, in that ſtiff country manner you now do, for above the ſpace of a moment; but throw ſometimes the one and ſometimes the other careleſly back, and lean it

on your hip; but when you are ſpeaking, be ſure you employ both in geſtures that may enforce attention to what you ſay. Then, as for your eyes, miſs, — you muſt always keep them broad open, and be ſure to have the laſt look of every one that takes notice of you.

Miſs. Does your ladyſhip mean the men as well as the women?

Lady. Undoubtedly,—the men to chooſe; a polite woman, and who is faſhionably genteel, is never aſhamed of any thing that ſhe either ſees or hears.

Her ladyſhip was going on with ſome farther directions concerning the management of the eyes, when ſhe was interrupted by a footman, who came to acquaint her, that a perſon, who call'd himſelf monſieur Le Petit Solee had brought her ladyſhip a dozen pair of French ſhoes;—on which ſhe cry'd out in a kind of tranſport: 'Oh, bring him up! 'bring him up this minute! — I have been in-'volved in the utmoſt diſtreſs: — I have had no-'thing but odious Engliſh ſhoes upon my feet for 'a whole week paſt.'

As I was now heartily weary of my ſituation, and had no curioſity to ſee either monſieur Le Petit Solee or his French ſhoes, I took the opportunity of the door being open, and left this ſcene of folly and affectation, regretting the time I had thrown away in being there.

CXAP. VIII.

Wherein the power of beauty, when accompany'd with virtue, is diſplay'd, in a very remarkable, as well as affecting occurrence.

VANITY, though placed rather among the follies than the vices of human nature, is yet

yet ſometimes productive of the very worſt we can be guilty of; and the leaſt miſchief it does, when indulged to an exceſs, is to render the perſon poſſeſs'd of it obſtinate, proud, impatient of contradiction, deaf to reproof, full of imaginary merit, and apt to deſpiſe what is truly ſo in another. This weakneſs, to give it no worſe a name, is generally aſcribed to the ſofter ſex, who being from their very childhood accuſtom'd to flattery and praiſe, are too ready to believe they are in reality the angels and goddeſſes they are told they are; but in my opinion it is doing great injuſtice to the ladies to ſay they are the only culpable, ſince we often find men, who, without having the ſame excuſe, are no leſs liable to fall into the ſame error.

Mutantius is one of the moſt graceful, and moſt accompliſh'd gentlemen of the preſent age: he has learning, wit, honour, generoſity, and good-nature: in a word, he is ſuch as might give him a juſt title to univerſal admiration, were he but a little leſs conſcious of deſerving it. To render his fine qualities yet more conſpicuous, he had the advantages of being deſcended from a very ancient family, and in poſſeſſion of an ample fortune. He had not long been of age, before ſeveral conſiderable matches were propoſed to him; all the men of his acquaintance, who had ſiſters or daughters, courted his alliance: wherever he appeared, the ladies put on their beſt looks; and not a few there were, who could help betraying by their eyes the ſecret languiſhment of their hearts.

Having his choice of ſo many, was probably the cauſe that for a long time hindered him from attaching himſelf to any particular object; —he was polite and gallant to all, —but made a ſerious addreſs to none:——he would pay his morning devoirs to one, — walk in the Mall with another,

dine with a third, drink tea with a fourth, attend a fifth to the play, or ſome other public entertainment: in ſhort, he divided his reſpects ſo equally to each, that no one had reaſon either to exult on the power of her own charms, or dread thoſe of her competitors. The little deity of ſoft deſires would not, however, ſuffer a man ſo form'd for love, to remain always among the number of inſenſibles: —at length a glance ſhot from Ariſtella's eyes was a dart that reach'd his very ſoul: all the different graces he had ſeen in other beauties, ſeem'd now to him to be ſumm'd up in her.

Ariſtella was, indeed, very lovely, and had been well educated: but her father, by gaming and other extravagancies, had reduced his eſtate ſo low, that when divided between four daughters, which he left at his deceaſe, the income was ſcarce ſufficient to buy them cloaths according to their birth; two of them, however, were married to tradeſmen of good repute in the city, and a third to a gentleman of a ſmall eſtate in the country. Ariſtella, who was the youngeſt, and the only one unprovided for, lived ſometimes with one, and ſometimes with another of the ſiſters, and by this means, having few expences beſides her dreſs, was enabled to appear in as genteel a manner as any woman of a moderate fortune could do.

It was at the houſe of one of her brother in-law's, who was a linnen-draper, and ſerved Mutantius with Hollands and Cambricks, that he firſt beheld her: — happening to call there when the maſter was abroad, he was deſired to walk into the parlour till his return: — Ariſtella was at work with her ſiſter when he came in; but the latter knowing he was a good cuſtomer, threw aſide what ſhe was about, and received him with a great deal of politeneſs: — her huſband not coming

ing home ſo ſoon as he was expected, ſhe made tea. Mutantius readily accepted the little regale ſhe preſented to him, as it gave him the opportunity of feaſting his eyes on her fair ſiſter:—on their entering into converſation, the tongue of Ariſtella loſt her nothing of what her eyes had gain'd; and as her beauty had in an inſtant captivated his heart, ſo her wit riveted the chain, and made the conqueſt ſure.

The tradeſman at laſt returning, Mutantius, after having agreed for ſome things he wanted in the ſhop, and order'd them to be ſent home, took an unwilling leave; but carried with him an idea which had afterwards more influence than he at firſt imagined. Love in its beginning plays wantonly about the heart, tickling it with flattering images; but having once got full poſſeſſion there, rules with tyrannic ſway, and bears down all before it: Mutantius indulged the pleaſing contemplation of Ariſtella's beauty 'till he was no longer able to live without ſeeing her, and for this purpoſe went again to the linnen-draper's, pretending there were ſome things he had forgot to beſpeak when he was there before. After having bought thoſe things which the ſeeming want of had given him an excuſe for going thither ſo ſoon again, and ſome previous diſcourſe on ordinary matters, he told the draper that he ſhould be glad to have his wife's advice concerning the trimming of ſome ſhirts which were then making for him: —— to this the other replied, that his wife would think herſelf honour'd in doing him any ſervice, but that ſhe was at that time unfortunately abroad.

Mutantius was not ſorry to hear ſhe was out of the way, and reſum'd briſkly, — 'Why then, I 'think it will be equal to me if the young lady, 'who was with her when I had the pleaſure of

'drinking tea here, will do me that favour: ſhe 'ſeem'd, I thought, to have good nature enough 'to grant ſuch a requeſt.' 'You mean my ſiſter, 'ſir, cry'd the draper.'—'I think your wife call'd 'her ſo, anſwered Mutantius.' 'Yes, ſir, rejoin'd 'the former; but ſhe is gone down to Kent this 'morning.'—'I thought ſhe had lived with you,' ſaid Mutantius. —— 'Not conſtantly, Sir, replied 'he; but ſhe has left us now ſooner than ſhe 'would have done, on account of her ſiſter's 'lying in.'

It was eaſy for a man of ſo much wit, and of ſo much deſign as Mutantius now had in his head, to get from the honeſt unſuſpecting draper all he wanted to be inform'd of in relation to the circumſtances of Ariſtella. As the inclinations of this gentleman, vehemently amorous as they were, had not at preſent the leaſt tendency to marriage with the young beauty, concerning whoſe affairs he had been ſo inquiſitive, he was far from being mortified on hearing ſhe had no fortune, and was in a manner dependant upon her kindred; nor thought it leſs conducive to the intereſt of his paſſion that ſhe was removed into the country, where he imagined he might find a more eaſy method of winning her to his deſires, than he could have done in town, under the eye of a ſiſter, who, by the little he had ſeen of her, he perceived to be a woman of great diſcretion. He loſt no time, but the very next day, attended by one ſervant, poſted down to Canterbury, within a quarter of a mile of which city, Ariſtella at preſent reſided.

Having no acquaintance in that part of the country, he took up his lodgings in one of the beſt inns, where pretending it was mere curioſity to ſee that ancient city which had brought him thither, ſeveral offered to accompany him to thoſe places which moſt deſerved the attention of a traveller.

veller. Among the number of theſe hoſpitable perſons, was the brother-in law of Ariſtella: — it is eaſy to ſuppoſe that Mutantius made uſe of all the arts he was maſter of to inſinuate himſelf into the good graces of a perſon whoſe acquaintance was ſo neceſſary to his deſign; and indeed, had not this accident happened, there ſeemed little probability of his accompliſhing them; for Ariſtella kept ſo cloſe in the houſe, that though he had been four days at Canterbury, and taken all imaginable pains to get a glimpſe of her, he never yet had been ſo happy.

Mutantius had ſomething in him no leſs engaging to the men than enchanting to the women: he knows how to ſuit himſelf to the humour of every one he converſes with; it was therefore not difficult for him to cultivate a friendſhip with a plain country gentleman, who, free from all guile, was equally free from all diſtruſt.—Beechly, for ſo he was call'd, had no other fault than loving his bottle a little too well, which Mutantius perceiving, fell in with his foible, and thereby gain'd his whole heart.

Theſe two gentlemen drinking together very late, Mutantius had ply'd the other ſo faſt with glaſſes, that he became more than ordinarily intoxicated; our lover obliged him to ſuffer himſelf to be attended home by his footman, and the next morning ſent a polite meſſage to enquire after his health. Beechly took this ſo kindly, that he came immediately after to the lodgings of Mutantius, to ſhew that he was well, and to deſire he would do him the honour of dining with him that day. 'My wife (ſays he) is in the ſtraw; but ſhe has a 'ſiſter who is at preſent with us, a good ſmart 'well-behaved girl, and will receive you in the 'beſt manner ſhe is able.'

It is not to be doubted, but that the heart of Mutantius flutter'd with the moſt rapturous ſenſation on hearing himſelf invited to a place where he was ſure of enjoying the company of her he ſo much languiſh'd for, and had taken ſuch pains to purſue. It is needleſs to ſay that he readily accepted ſo obliging a ſummons, nor that he prolonged the hour of complying with it: he was met by Beechly at the gate with all imaginable demonſtrations of a ſincere welcome, and conducted into the parlour, where Ariſtella, who ſoon after enter'd, was preſented to him.

Whatever emotions Mutantius might feel in approaching to ſalute her, they were yet inferior to her's in the firſt ſurprize of ſeeing him there: — ſhe had heard her brother Beechly talk of a fine gentleman lately come to Canterbury, and had that morning received orders from him to prepare a handſome dinner for his entertainment; but as ſhe had not heard him mention the name of his new friend, and had no curioſity to aſk any thing concerning him, could little expect he was the ſame ſhe had ſeen at her other ſiſter's in London. She had, it ſeems, from the firſt interview with him, been poſſeſs'd of ſentiments in his favour, which, if not altogether ſo paſſionate as thoſe ſhe inſpired him with, were yet no leſs ſoft and tender; but conſcious of the vaſt diſparity between their fortunes, ſhe had endeavour'd to check the growth of an inclination, which ſhe thought could only be deſtructive of her peace. But on this ſecond and unexpected meeting him again, the ſtifled wiſhes of her ſoul burſt out a-freſh; a ſudden flow of joy ruſh'd over her heart, which, join'd to the ſurprize ſhe was in, ſpread a kind of wild, tho' agreeable confuſion, in her eyes and voice, while ſhe made thoſe compliments which civility exacted from her to a ſtranger.

Mutantius,

Mutantius, to whoſe penetrating eyes the change in her countenance was very viſible, looked on it as a happy preſage of the ſucceſs of his deſign; and the ſecret pleaſure this imagination gave him, brighten'd all his air, and added new graces to every thing he ſaid or did, ſo that Ariſtella became now quite loſt in love and admiration. This day prov'd, indeed, extremely fortunate to Mutantius: dinner was no ſooner over, than Beechly was called out to a perſon who waited to ſpeak with him on ſome buſineſs in another room; the lover took this opportunity of declaring his paſſion to his miſtreſs, and relating to her the pains he had taken to get a ſight of her; and the anſwers ſhe made, tho' very modeſt and diſcreet, were ſuch as gave him no reaſon to deſpair. — Beechly returning, he broke off their converſation; he took Mutantius to ſhew him his garden, which, tho' not ornamented with ſtatues, or any exotic curioſities, were very pretty. Mutantius was laviſh in his praiſes on every thing he ſaw; but above all, his fancy ſeemed taken with a long graſs walk, and a cloſe arbour at the end of it: — 'If I had ſuch a walk as this in town, ſaid 'he, I ſhould never trouble the Mall, Vauxhall, 'nor Ranelagh.'—'Since you cannot carry this with 'you replied Beechly, you ſhall be extremely wel-'come to make as much uſe of it as you think fit 'while you ſtay in this part of the world.'

Mutantius thanked him, but ſaid he was an early riſer, and ſhould chuſe ſuch a walk chiefly for the ſake of meditation in a morning, and that to come at ſuch hours might give too much trouble to the ſervants. — 'I can eaſily remedy that difficulty, 'ſince you make it one, anſwered the other; there 'is a door that opens behind the arbour into a little 'field where I keep a cow; — I ſeldom have oc-'caſion to make uſe of the key, and it is at your 'ſervice; — ſo you may come in as early or as

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'late as you pleaſe, without diſturbing any of my 'family, or being diſturbed by them.'

The lover made a thouſand acknowledgments to him for this favour, and received the key, which, in his mind, he looked upon as a ſure paſſport to all the happineſs he wiſhed at preſent to enjoy.

He went the next morning, taking a book in his hand, to prevent ſuſpicion in caſe he ſhould be ſeen, though there was no great danger of that, as Beechly kept but two maids and one man ſervant, who, it might be ſuppoſed, had too much buſineſs in a morning to ramble in the garden; but he might reaſonably hope to meet with Ariſtella, who having nothing to employ her time, might probably amuſe ſome part of it in that agreeable place. It is likely, however, he might have been diſappointed for many days together, if fortune had not now attended him, as ſhe had hitherto done during the courſe of this adventure.

Ariſtella was there indeed before him, in the ſame walk, and very near the arbour through which he entered; — ſhe had come thither to gather cinquefoil for her ſiſter, the nurſe who attended her being apprehenſive of her falling into a feveriſh diſorder. 'Tis likely ſhe was little leſs ſurpriſed on ſeeing him in that place, than ſhe had been when introduced to her by her brother; but as I was not preſent, and have this part of the ſtory from the report of others, can relate nothing of the particulars of their diſcourſe, and only ſay in general, that he ſpared no vows nor proteſtations to convince her of his paſſion, and that he prevailed on her to return to him again, after having carried in the herbs. His entreaties, join'd to her own ſecret inclinations, engaged her to ſee him the next day; this meeting was ſucceeded by another, that by a third, and ſo on for ſeveral mornings together. — every one of them ſtill more endearing him to her affections,

affections; but, in ſpite of the pleaſure ſhe took in his addreſſes, ſhe could not keep herſelf from ſome doubt of the ſincerity of his paſſion, whenever ſhe reflected on the inequality of their fortunes. One day, expreſſing herſelf very emphatically on this occaſion, he cry'd out, 'Talk not of fortune, — 'by Heaven; your heart is all I wiſh!'— This he repeated ſo often, and ſo tenderly, that ſhe at laſt confeſs'd it was already his.

Having brought her to this point, he now thought it proper to let her know the real aim of all his courtſhip: he began with telling her, that beauty, ſuch as hers, merited to be ſet off with all the advantages of dreſs and grandeur; that ſhe had waſted too much of her youth on a mean dependance on her kindred; and concluded with the offer of a large ſettlement, proteſting to her at the ſame time, that he would never marry any other woman, and that ſhe ſhould live in every thing like his wife, except the name.

If a dagger had pierced the gentle breaſt of Ariſtella, it could not have given her more pain than did this cruel declaration: for ſome moments ſhe was unable to make any reply, but burſt into a flood of tears, and diſcovered all the ſymptoms of the moſt violent grief: he endeavoured to calm this tempeſt in her mind, by all the arts that love and wit could inſpire, but all was now in vain; a virtuous pride, by degrees, got the better of her ſorrows, and ſtarting from him, ſhe cry'd out, — 'Deceitful and ungenerous man! think not that 'your baſe deſires ſhall triumph over the weakneſs 'I have confeſs'd for you; no, I will never ſee 'you more, nor henceforth think of you, but with 'horror and deteſtation.'

In ſpeaking theſe words ſhe flew out of the arbour, rage gave wings to her feet, yet Mutantius would certainly have overtaken her, if the

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ſight of a man, whom Beechly had employed to do ſome work in the garden, had not made him turn back. He went to his lodgings much diſconcerted at this accident, but the knowledge he had of Ariſtella's affection for him kept him from totally deſpairing ;—he repaired to the arbour next morning, but no Ariſtella appeared ; he went again, but had no better ſucceſs; reſolved to ſee her if poſſible, he made a viſit at the houſe, and told Beechly in a free manner, that he was come to take a ſecond dinner with him ; to which he replied with a compliment ſuitable to the occaſion.

Mutantius was again diſappointed: Ariſtella hearing he was there, ſent word to her brother that ſhe had a violent tooth-ach, and deſired he would excuſe her from coming down : — this drove the lover almoſt to diſtraction, he went home, wrote to her, and made his footman go, as of his own accord, to chat with the ſervants, and loiter about the houſe 'till he ſhould ſee Ariſtella and deliver the letter to her. The fellow found means to execute his commiſſion ; Ariſtella took the letter on his preſenting it to her, and went up into her chamber ; but after reflecting a little, would not truſt her own heart ſo far as to read this dangerous epiſtle: ſhe therefore put it under a cover, and having ſealed and directed it, came down and gave it the man, ſaying, 'There's my anſwer to your 'maſter's letter.

Never had the vanity of Mutantius met with ſo ſevere a ſhock, yet could he not forbear revering the virtue he attempted to deſtroy : — if before he lov'd, he now ador'd her ; and the more he conſidered her perfections, the more he found her worthy to be his wife ; — yet, when he thought of marriage, the idea of that ſtate was irkſome to him: he knew that at preſent he was the idol of the fair, but ſhould ceaſe to be ſo, if once he became a huſband :

band: — he could not bear to loſe his darling admiration, yet was equally unable to bear life without the enjoyment of Ariſtella. After ſome debate within himſelf, his paſſion, however, got the better of his vanity, and he reſolved to marry Ariſtella; but which way to let her know he meant to do ſo, ſeemed as great a difficulty as any he had paſs'd thro' in attempting to ſeduce her: — he was convinced ſhe would neither ſee him nor receive a letter from him, yet, in ſpite of all this, love fertile in contrivances, put a ſtratagem into his head, which had the deſired effect; — it was this:

Beechly's new-born ſon had not been yet baptiſed, on account of the mother's having been more than ordinarily indiſpoſed during her lying-in; — he offered to be one of the ſponſors, which the other gladly accepted. Ariſtella could not now avoid his preſence, but behaved with ſo much reſerve, ſcarce ever looking towards him, that a man leſs conſcious of his own merit, might have been abaſh'd. After ſome time, when moſt of the company were engaged in converſation, he found an opportunity to ſay to her, 'Madam, I beſeech 'you will forgive the raſh propoſal I preſumed to 'make you — be aſſur'd I have heartily repented 'of it, and have now no deſigns upon you but 'what are truly honourable:' — to which ſhe replied, 'Sir, I ſhall never believe a man means me 'well who has once thought ſo poorly of me.' 'I only beg, reſumed he, the liberty of entertaining you once more in private, and if what I have 'then to ſay does not merit your pardon and favour, 'I ſhall leave Canterbury, and perhaps the world, 'for ever.' — He could add no more at that time, Beechly calling him to pledge him in a bumper to the young Chriſtian; but before they parted, he found means to enforce what he had laſt ſaid, with

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ſo moving on air, that ſhe conſented to ſee him the next morning.

The conſequence of this interview was a full forgiveneſs for what was paſt on the ſide of Ariſtella, and on that of Mutantius a ſolemn vow of making her his wife the moment ſhe conſented to be ſo; but added, that there were ſome circumſtances in his affairs which required their marriage ſhould be kept a ſecret for a time: to this laſt article ſhe made no direct anſwer at preſent; but the next day, when they met again by appointment, ſuffered herſelf to be overcome by his perſuaſions, and promiſed that every thing ſhould be as he would have it. It was at laſt agreed between them, that he ſhould return to London in a few days, and that ſhe ſhould follow ar ſoon as her ſiſter's recovery permitted to take her leave with decency.

Both theſe lovers were now in a ſtate of perfect contentment, and each of them obſerved their promiſe with the utmoſt punctuality; but what afterwards befel them muſt be the ſubject of another chapter.

CHAP. IX.

Contains only a continuation of the ſame narrative, begun in the foregoing chapter, and will not be concluded in this.

MUTANTIUS being appriſed by a letter from Ariſtella, of the day ſhe ſhould come to town, went in his own coach to Greenwich to meet her, and conducted her to a very handſome lodging, in one of the beſt ſtreets near Bloomſbury-Square, where he had alſo provided ſervants to attend her. She was at firſt a little ſcrupulous of putting herſelf under his protection, 'till the ſacred ceremony had been perform'd: — he perceived the apprehenſions ſhe was under, and immediately relieved

lieved them by renewing his proteſtations, that the next morning ſhould make his perſon as inviolably her's as his heart had been from the firſt moment he beheld her, and at the ſame time ſhew'd her a ring and licence, which he had already prepared for that purpoſe. He ſupp'd with her that evening, but when it was over, very reſpectfully retired, to leave her to that repoſe he judged neceſſary after the fatigue of the journey.

I come now to that part of the ſtory which I had an opportunity of being both an eye and ear-witneſs of. I was acquainted with the gentlewoman of the the houſe where Ariſtella was placed, and happened to call there on ſome buſineſs the very next morning after that young lady had been brought thither. My friend told me, among other diſcourſe, that ſhe had lett her lodgings at a very high rent; but was apprehenſive the perſon they were for was no better than a kept woman: on my aſking what ground ſhe had for ſuch a ſuſpicion, ſhe replied, that ſhe had lett them to a gentleman of fortune, call'd Mutantius, for the uſe of a lady whom he brought to take poſſeſſion of them the night before, and that he had hired ſervants to wait upon her, who knew as little of the lady as ſhe did She farther added, that the lady was young and pretty, and that ſhe could not help thinking it a little odd, ſuch a one ſhould be under the care of ſo gay a ſpark as Mutantius.

As I was perfectly acquainted with the character of Mutantius, I was of opinion ſhe was in the right; and adviſed her, to ſay nothing till ſhe ſaw farther into the matter, and not loſe ſo beneficial a lodger on a bare conjecture. She approved of what I ſaid, and I took my leave, but not to go home; what ſhe had told fill'd me with a curioſity to diſcover ſomething more of this affair, ſo went no farther than the firſt blind alley I found, where I

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put on my Inviſible Belt, and return'd again juſt as Mutantius knock'd at the door, — I enter'd with him, and follow'd him up ſtairs. — The ſight of Ariſtella convinced me that the good woman had not been miſtaken in the deſcription ſhe gave me of her: — the lovers ran into each other's arms, and Mutantius looking on her with the greateſt tenderneſs, ſpoke thus:

Mutantius. Now, my deareſt Ariſtella, I am come to put a final end to all your doubts either of my love or honour.

Ariſtella. I am pleaſed to think that the perfect confidence I have ſhewn in both gives me ſome ſort of claim to the proof you are now about to give of them, ſince I muſt confeſs myſelf in every other reſpect ſo unworthy of you.

Mutantius. You are worthy of every thing; but, my dear, you forget that there is another teſtimony that I expect from you of the regard you have for me.

Ariſtella. Name it, that my ready compliance may convince you how happy I think myſelf in every opportunity of obliging you.

Mutantius. It is that you will be content that for ſome time our marriage may be kept a ſecret.

Ariſtella. You know I have promis'd it.

Mutantius. Yes, in general terms; but you have ſiſters who are very dear to you, and tho' I doubt not of their diſcretion, I cannot think a ſecret ſafe when truſted in ſo many hands: will then your love for me enable you to endure their reproaches for your ſuppoſed diſhonour, rather than reveal what is inconvenient for me to be made known?

Ariſtella. The trial is a little ſevere, but will not laſt for ever.

Mutantius. No, my dear, a time will come when your innocence ſhall be fully clear'd, and like the ſun, ſhine brighter after this ſhort eclipſe; —

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till then may I depend that the name of wife and huſband ſhall be known only between ourſelves?

Ariſtella. You may.

Mutantius. Swear it then.

Ariſtella. By all that's ſacred.

Mutantius. Hold, my dear; I would have you firſt underſtand the full extent of the vow you are about to make; — you ſwear that no imaginary provocation on my ſide, nor no unjuſt contempt nor ill treatment you may meet with from the world, ſhall ever extort from you a confeſſion that you are my wife, 'till I myſelf ſhall publickly acknowledge you to be ſo.

Ariſtella. All this I ſolemnly ſwear, and invoke Heaven to bleſs me as I ſhall religiouſly obſerve it.

Mutantius. Charming, generous creature, and in return, to prevent all future apprehenſions in prejudice of my faith or conſtancy from riſing in your breaſt, if it were poſſible for me to take a baſe advantage of the obligation I have laid you under, and make my addreſſes to another woman on the ſcore of marriage, I here releaſe you from your vow, and leave you at liberty to declare yourſelf my wife, aſſert your prior right, and proclaim me for a villain.

Ariſtella. Heaven forbid it ſhould ever come to that.

Mutantius. No, my Ariſtella, there is no danger, I have already rejected greater offers than ever will be made to me again: to deal ſincerely with you, there has been always in my nature an extreme repugnancy to the name of marriage; the name of huſband was irkſome to me; — no woman but yourſelf had ever charms to reconcile me to it; but your beauty, ſweetneſs, and unaffected modeſty, have now reformed my ſoul, and by degrees

grees will make me as proud of Hymen's fetters as I ſhould once have been aſham'd of them.

Ariſtella. It ſhall be my whole ſtudy to make them eaſy to you.

Mutantius. I know it will; but come, my love, a coach waits to carry us to church; that ſolemn ſcene which fixes the everlaſting happineſs or miſery of all who approach it in the manner we do.

On concluding theſe words, he took her by the hand and led her down ſtairs; I was cloſe behind them when they went into the coach, which was ordered to drive to Clerkenwell. —I preſently ſuppoſe he made choice of this place, as there was the leaſt danger of his being ſeen by any one who knew him. I followed on foot, but came time enough to ſee Mutantius reſign that liberty he had once ſet ſo high a value on as to reſolve never to part with; the ceremony was performed by the curate of the pariſh, and the clerk officiated as father to give away the bride: after all was over, Mutantius deſired their marriage might be regiſtered, and a certificate of it given to Ariſtella; both which were accordingly done.

I now left the new wedded pair to diſpoſe of themſelves as they thought fit, and returned to my apartment, in order to ruminate at leiſure on an adventure which ſeem'd to me to have in it many inconſiſtencies. But the more I thought on this adventure, the more I was confounded; and the reſult of my meditations was, that it muſt be left to time to unravel the myſtery; I kept, however, a watchful eye on the behaviour of Mutantius, but was little the wiſer for the pains I took, as I found he only lived in the ſame gay and gallant manner he had always done in reſpect to the ladies.

But now, methinks, I hear the reader cry out with ſome impatience, 'How did Ariſtella behave all this time? How could ſhe, the wife of this 'inconſtant

'inconſtant man, ſupport the ſhare that others 'had in his affections.' It is, indeed, impoſſible for me to ſay in what manner ſhe would have reſented ſo provoking a circumſtance, if known to her; but ſhe lived too retired for it to reach her ears; ſhe had, however, other troubles more than ſufficient for human fortitude to ſuſtain, but of what nature muſt be left to the next chapter to explain.

CHAP. X.

The cataſtrophe of this adventure cannot fail of exciting compaſſion in the breaſts of my fair readers, and alſo afford matter of ſpeculation to the other ſex.

THE purſuit of other adventures, which ſhall be inſerted in their proper places before the concluſion of this work, hinder'd me for a long time from going to ſee in what manner Ariſtella was treated by Mutantius: but at length, ſome uneaſy reflections on her account raiſed an impatience in me to know the certainty of her preſent ſtate. Accordingly I went one day to the houſe where ſhe was lodged; but, to my great ſurpriſe, found ſhe had made but a ſhort ſtay there, and had been removed a conſiderable time before my coming. On my aſking ſome queſtions of my friend, concerning the reaſon of it, the good woman anſwer'd me in theſe or the like terms: —— 'The affair 'was juſt as I expected, ſaid ſhe; I pity the poor 'young gentlewoman, indeed; ſhe has not the 'looks of ſuch a one; but I ſuppoſe ſhe has been 'decoy'd by abundance of fair promiſes: I wonder, 'however, that Mutantius, knowing the character 'of my houſe, and that I alway had people of the beſt,

'beſt faſhion lodge with me, ſhould offer to bring 'a kept-miſtreſs under my roof; but I was very 'free with him, and told him my mind plainly on 'the occaſion.'

'And pray what anſwer did he make, cry'd I, 'with ſome impatience, when you call'd her a kept-'miſtreſs? — 'Very little to the purpoſe truly, 'reſum'd ſhe; he only ſaid, that ſhe was a gentle-'woman, and a friend of his, and as ſuch expected 'I ſhould treat her civilly: I told him, it was not 'in my nature to treat any body uncivilly, but 'that I would encourage no ſuch doings; and 'therefore deſired he would provide another lodg-'ing for her; — on this he flew into a paſſion, 'told me I was an ignorant fooliſh woman, and 'the like; but I did not regard his bouncing, and as he found I was reſolute, took his madam away in a few days afterwards.'

The manner in which this woman ſpoke, made me extremely commiſerate the condition of Ariſtella, who, though a lawful wife, was obliged, through the caprice of Mutantius, and the vow ſhe had taken, to endure all the contumely due to a proſtitute. I would have given almoſt any thing but the ſecret of my Inviſible Belt and Tablets to have cleared Ariſtella's innocence in the fulleſt manner to this gentlewoman; but as there was no doing one without the other, I was compelled to content myſelf with getting out of her directions to the place where this much-injured lady was removed, reſolving to take the firſt opportunity to ſee what atonement the behaviour of Mutantius made to her in private, for the injuſtice he did her reputation in public.

I was ſo lucky as to find them together the firſt day I went; but the ſcene I was witneſs of, inſtead of diminiſhing, very much added to the concern I had carried with me. Ariſtella was ſitting very

very melancholy in one corner of the room, Mutantius in another, with all the marks of diſcontent and ill-humour in his countenance :—by what follow'd, it appears that ſhe had been ſpeaking ſomewhat to him in relation to the diſcovery of their marriage ;—I doubt not, by what I ſaw of her behaviour both before and afterwards, that ſhe expreſs'd herſelf in very gentle terms on the occaſion ; but the bare mention of ſuch a thing, to a man of his preſent way of thinking, was of itſelf a ſufficient offence. I have already deſcribed the poſture I found him in ; but juſt as I entered the room he reply'd to what ſhe had ſaid, and that reply drew on a converſation which let me into the whole of both their ſentiments.

Mutantius. I am ſorry to find you have ſo little regard for me, and I indeed ſo little prudence, as whenever I am with you to fall eternally upon a ſubject which you know is ſo diſagreeable to me.

Ariſtella. If you lov'd me half ſo well as you once pretended, it would not be ſo diſagreeable ; and you would, at leaſt, acquaint me with the reaſons which oblige me to live in the manner I do.

Mutantius. Perhaps it is not proper for me to reveal them.

Ariſtella. Oh, Mutantius ! I not know what to think of my condition.—Why did you marry me?

Mutantius. Becauſe I then liked you better than any other woman, and if I do not ſtill continue to do ſo, it is your own fault ; I hate to be teaz'd ; beſides, the conditions of our marriage were that it ſhould be kept a ſecret.

Ariſtella. Yes,—for a time.

Mutantius. That time will not be ſhortened by your impatience.

Ariſtella. It may, for if it laſts much longer my heart muſt infallibly break.

Mutantius. Piſh, women's hearts are not of ſuch brittle ſtuff; the head is in more danger, when ſwelled with pride and vanity.

Ariſtella. Indeed, ſir, I think it would at leaſt become you to be a little more ſerious on the occaſion.

Mutantius. With all my heart, madam, as ſerious as you pleaſe; for faith I am not in a humour to be merry. Seriouſly then, you ſeem to me to be one of the moſt ungrateful, and moſt unreaſonable women under the ſun. Have I not taken you from a dependance on your ſiſters? Have you not now good lodgings, ſervants to wait on you, and an allowance ſufficient to ſupport you in a faſhion beyond what you could ever have expected? yet all this is nothing in your account.

Ariſtella. Nothing when balanced againſt a life of infamy; the very ſervants you upbraid me with deſpiſe me while they ſerve me; the people of the houſe treat me but with an enforced civility; I paſs my days as one who was an alien to the world, and had no buſineſs in it; never partake the joys of ſocial converſation, never viſit, nor am viſited, and ſcarce dare venture to breathe the open air, leſt I ſhould be ſeen by any who have known me, eſpecially by my ſiſters, who, mean as you think of them, know how to ſet a juſt value upon reputation, and to ſcorn all riches without it.

Mutantius. A very fine catalogue of complaints truly: Have you any more?

Ariſtella. Yes, one thing more, which, with what indifference ſoever you may now regard me, ought not, methinks, to eſcape your conſideration; you know I am far advanced in my pregnancy; perhaps too of a ſon; — and can you ſupport the thoughts, that an infant, born the lawful heir of your eſtate and name, ſhall be ſaluted, on his firſt ſeeing light, with the odious title of baſtard?

Mutan-

Mutantius. What will he be the worſe, unleſs you expect to have ſo wiſe a child as to know what is ſaid of him as ſoon as he comes into the world?

Ariſtella. Oh, Mutantius! Mutantius! this is cruel dealing.

She ſaid no more, but wept bitterly; Mutantius, who it muſt be own'd has ſome good nature, ſeem'd much moved at ſeeing her thus, and having look'd on her ſome moments with a great deal of tenderneſs, bid her come to him; ſhe obey'd, but advanced with the moſt ſorrowful and dejected air; he pull'd her to him, made her ſit upon his knee, and kiſſing away the tears, he ſpoke thus:

Mutantius. Come, my poor Ariſtella, do not be ſo fooliſh, you have no cauſe for weeping, you know yourſelf virtuous, and I know you are ſo, and have no need to be afflicted at the miſtaken opinion others may have of you, eſpecially as it is not to laſt always.

Ariſtella. If I were certain when this event would happen, even though it were much longer than I hope it will, I ſhould wait with patience.

Mutantius. You muſt depend for that upon my love and honour; it is not in my power to aſſign the day and hour. To deal ſincerely with you, I have been a railer at marriage, have refuſed offers of that nature as much above my expectations as I was above yours, and I cannot all at once ſubmit to be pointed at for a huſband, and hear people laugh and cry out, that I had thrown myſelf away: but this, my dear, you may aſſure yourſelf, that I will endeavour to get rid of theſe ſcruples as ſoon as poſſible; in the mean time, I will give you as much of my company as can be ſpared from buſineſs and other attachments which are not to be diſpenſed with;—I came on purpoſe to devote this whole day to you, drive me

not from you by your diſcontent; kiſs me, and give me your promiſe that you will be entirely eaſy.

She comply'd readily with the firſt part of this injunction, and ſaid ſhe would do her beſt to perform the other. But by what I had now ſeen of the behaviour and diſpoſition of Mutantius, I found reaſon to believe it would be yet a great while before he would bring himſelf to make a declaration of his marriage, ſo reſolved not to take the trouble of any farther inquiſitions, but wait 'till common fame ſhould give me intelligence of it. This event, however, happened much ſooner than I expected; but was brought about by an accident which excited the extremeſt pity inſtead of congratulations: the unfortunate Ariſtella was not born to enjoy a happineſs ſhe ſo ardently had wiſh'd for, and ſo long been made to hope; death alone had the power to give what life in vain had waited for; and the ſame breath which told me Mutantius had acknowledged her to be his wife, informed me alſo that ſhe was no more.

Ariſtella, on her leaving the country, was charged with letters and ſome little preſents from Mrs. Beechly to her two ſiſters in London; but being hindered from executing this commiſſion in perſon, by the obligation Mutantius had lain her under, ſhe ſent what was entruſted to her care by a porter, accompanied with a little billet from herſelf; in which ſhe told them, that an affair of the utmoſt conſequence kept her at preſent from ſeeing them, but that ſhe hoped to do ſo in a ſhort time, and would then acquaint them with the reaſons for having abſented herſelf, and begg'd they would entertain no unfavourable thoughts of her conduct in this point.

As ſhe was circumſtanced, it was not in her power to have acted otherwiſe; yet what ſatisfaction

faction could ſuch a letter give the two ſiſters? for a girl to baniſh herſelf from her kindred, without acquainting them with the motive, or the place to which ſhe was retired, had a right to raiſe in them conjectures of the worſt ſort: they were diſtracted at the thoughts of her ſuppoſed ruin, and ſpared no pains to find her out, in order to bring her home, and ſnatch her from the ſhame they imagined ſhe was involved in. Fruitleſs was their ſearch for a long time; but chance, at length, diſcovered not only where ſhe lived, but alſo that ſhe was ſupported by a gentleman, and look'd upon as a kept-miſtreſs. Quite enraged, they went to the houſe where ſhe was lodged, and the door happening to be open, flew up ſtairs without any ceremony and burſt in upon her;—the ſight of her, for her pregnancy was viſible, added to the paſſions they were before enflam'd with; they reviled her in the moſt bitter terms, while poor Ariſtella, bound by the fatal oath ſhe had taken, could ſay nothing in defence of her innocence, but what ſerved to convince them more fully of her guilt. After having loaded her with opprobrious names, they left her with the ſame precipitation they had come, vowing never more to ſee or think of her as a ſiſter.

Impoſſible it is for any one to conceive what the ſoul of Ariſtella ſuffer'd in this ſhocking ſtroke; conſcious of innocence, yet labouring under all the appearance of guilt; ſcandaliz'd, abuſed by thoſe to whom ſhe had been ſo dear, yet incapable either of defending her wrong'd virtue, or of blaming the ſeverity ſhe was treated with for her ſuppoſed fall:—every paſſion that can agitate the human heart at once aſſailed, and overwhelm'd her with a variety of anguiſh; the force of which had ſuch an effect upon her, as to cauſe an abortion that ſame night, and alſo to throw her into convulſions,

which in a few hours rendered her life deſpair'd of by all about her. In her intervals, between thoſe fits which deprived her of all ſenſe and motion, ſhe cry'd out for Mutantius, aſk'd where he was, and ſaid ſhe could not die without ſeeing him; — meſſengers were immediately diſpatched to him;— he came, ſeem'd greatly affected at the condition he found her in, but was much more ſo when he was inform'd what it was had thrown her into it. She was inſenſible on his entrance, but recovering ſoon after, and ſeeing him ſo near her, catch'd hold of his hand, and with agonies expreſſible, ſaid to him,—'Oh! Mutantius, you now will be 'rid of a tie you have been aſham'd to own.'— 'No, by Heaven, cry'd he, live, live, Ariſtella, 'and I will declare to all the world that you are 'my wife, my lawful married wife.'

Whether it were this ſudden ruſh of joy, on hearing him ſpeak theſe words, that was too powerful for her weakneſs to ſuſtain, or that the lamp of life was waſted by the agonies ſhe had before endured, is altogether uncertain, but ſhe expired that moment, yielding up her laſt breath on the boſom of her too late repenting huſband. — Love, pity, and remorſe now engroſs'd all his faculties; he kept his promiſe, acknowledg'd her for his wife, had her intomb'd with great funeral pomp, in his own family-vault, and paid all imaginable honours to her memory. Whether he will ever relapſe into his former vanities, time alone muſt ſhew; but at preſent, this once gay thoughtleſs rover, either is, or affects to be, loſt to the joys he lately was ſo fond of; behaves with the utmoſt indifference towards the fair ſex; ſeldom goes to any publick place; ſees but little company at home; and ſeems to be in every thing the very reverſe of what he was.

As

As to the ſiſters of the unfortunate Ariſtella, they were ſeiz'd with the moſt deep affliction, when they came to know the ſad effects their raſh reſentment had occaſioned; which may ſerve as a warning to all perſons not to be over haſty in cenſuring actions, the true meaning of which they cannot immediately comprehend.

End of the FIFTH BOOK.

THE Inviſible Spy.

BOOK VI.

CHAP. I.

Is dedicated entirely to the ladies, as it relates an adventure which nearly concerns them to take notice of.

AMONG all the numerous modes which the wantonneſs of luxury has of late years introduced into this kingdom for deſtroying of time, I know of none more fatal to the virtue and reputation of the female ſex than maſquerades; I mean, as that amuſement is at preſent conducted. Indeed, when a ſelect company of ladies and gentlemen agree among themſelves, or are invited by ſome perſon of condition, to divert each other in ſuch diſguiſes as their ſeveral fancies ſhall make choice of, the caſe is widely different; for there, after paſſing a few hours in muſic, dancing, and pleaſant raillery, according to the characters they aſſume, the maſks are all thrown aſide, and every one appears as he is; ſo that none will venture to talk or act beneath a vizard in ſuch a manner, as when he ſtands reveal'd,

veal'd, will either reflect ſhame on himſelf, or give offence to thoſe he has been entertaining. Maſquerades thus manag'd, I cannot but allow to be not only innocent amuſements, as they ſerve to whet the wit and exhilerate the mind.

But here, ſorry am I to ſay it, the maſquerade houſes may with propriety enough be call'd ſhops, where opportunities for immorality, prophaneneſs, obſcenity, and almoſt every kind of vice, are retailed to any one who will become a cuſtomer; and at the low rate of ſeven and twenty ſhillings, the moſt abandon'd courtezan, the moſt profligate rake, or common ſharper, purchaſes the privilege of mingling with the firſt peers and peereſſes of the realm, and not ſeldom affronts both modeſty and greatneſs with impunity. I perceive, to my great ſatisfaction, there are ſome ladies, who, touch'd with a juſt ſenſe of what is owing to their dignity, are determined not to expoſe themſelves any more in a place, where, if no worſe enſues, the moſt licentious freedoms of ſpeech, at leaſt, are often offer'd to the chaſteſt ears; and I am not without hope that the influence of their example will prevail on many others to do the ſame. For the benefit, however, of the unwary, and thoſe who by their ſmall acquaintance in town, are ignorant of the cuſtoms of theſe dangerous amuſements, it will not be amiſs to relate an adventure which I was witneſs of, and may ſerve as a warning to all who are truly innocent and deſire to remain ſo.

Alexis and Matilda were the ſon and daughter of two gentlemen who lived near Newcaſtle; they had loved each other even before either well knew what was meant by the paſſion, and as their underſtanding ripen'd, their inclinations increaſed: hope, for ſome time, gilded the proſpect of their wiſhes; but, when they leaſt expected, a ſtop was put to the conſummation by an unfortunate diſa-

greement between their parents. Alexis was forbid to ſee Matilda, and Matilda ever to think on Alexis; but theſe commands had little authority over hearts ſo fondly enamour'd as theirs: they form'd the moſt romantic contrivances to keep alive the flame with which each had inſpired the other, ſome of which ſucceeded ſo well, as to enable them to continue an intercourſe by letters, and even to gain private interviews. It was the father of Alexis who of the two had been moſt refractory, and he dying a ſmall time after, the young gentleman found means to reconcile matters ſo effectually with the parents of Matilda, that they at length conſented to give her to him, and completed the happineſs of the equally loving and beloved pair.

Matilda, whoſe every care, hope, and joy, had all been center'd in her dear Alexis, had nothing now to wiſh beyond what ſhe was in poſſeſſion of; and Alexis thought himſelf ſo bleſs'd, that he even defied the power of fortune to give him any cauſe of diſquiet:—Fatal ſecurity!—how little dependance for the future is there on the preſent good? They had not long enjoy'd the ſweets of this ſo-much admired union, before Matilda, who had never been in London, expreſs'd a curioſity to ſee it;—Alexis, proud to embrace every opportunity of giving her pleaſure, immediately took the hint, and told her he was ready to conduct her there as ſoon as ſhe pleaſed. Accordingly they ſet out, and arrived in London about September; Alexis took ready-furniſh'd lodgings, in a handſome houſe near St. James's, for ſix months, in which time he thought he ſhould be able to ſhew Matilda every thing worth her ſeeing in town.

Alexis had received his firſt precepts at Weſtminſter ſchool, and having no relations in London, his father requeſted me, by letters, to call ſometimes

times at the houſe where he boarded, and have an eye over his behaviour; I did ſo, and the advice I gave him being delivered not in a magiſterial but friendly manner, the lad conceived a very great affection for me from that time, and has preſerved it ever ſince: he made me the compliment of a firſt viſit on his coming to town, told me how happy he was, and begg'd I would be no ſtranger to the fair perſon who had made him ſo. I accepted the invitation, and went the next day; on his preſenting Matilda to me, I was ſtruck with admiration; for beſides every thing that could conſtitute a perfect beauty, there was a ſweet ſimplicity, and a chearful unaffected innocence which ſhone thro' the whole, and brighten'd every grace.

As the ſole excitement Matilda had to take a journey to London, was to gratify her curioſity with the ſight of it, there was no eminent ſtructure or place of note to which ſhe was not conducted by her Alexis. A new ſcene of diverſions open'd as the winter ſeaſon came on; plays, operas, and maſquerades now began to attract attention: the two firſt of theſe amuſements Matilda was not altogether a ſtranger to, having often ſeen ſomewhat like them acted by ſtroling companies in the country; but ſhe had not the leaſt notion of maſquerades, and the little account Alexis was able to give her, making her more impatient to know what ſort of entertainment they afforded, it may be eaſily ſuppoſed, that ſo indulgent a huſband would not ſuffer her to continue long in ſuſpenſe; —it may be too, that he had ſome curioſity of his own to gratify in this point, having, it ſeems, never been at a maſquerade himſelf.

Tickets accordingly were purchaſed, and habits hired. I happen'd to make a morning viſit the day they were to go, and found Matilda buſy in ornamenting a little hat and crook: the moment I en-

ter'd the room ſhe told me, with the greateſt pleaſure in her countenance, that ſhe was to be at the maſquerade that night, and was to aſſume the character of a ſhepherdeſs; I replied, ſhe could not take upon her one more ſuitable to her youth and innocence.

I ſaid nothing to them of my deſign; but when evening came, I equipt myſelf with a Domine, and haſted to that Babel of hurry and confuſion; where it was no difficult matter to diſcover the perſons I ſought after, as I knew the dreſſes they were in. I ſoon diſtinguiſh'd the ſhepherdeſs, and the huſband by the blue Domine I had ſeen lying on a table in his dining-room, and perceiv'd there were many eyes upon Matilda: for though her face was conceal'd, her ſhape and air had ſomewhat in them ſufficiently attractive. But there was one who above all the reſt ſeem'd particularly attentive to her motions; he was in the habit of a huntſman, a character which I afterwards had reaſon to ſay to myſelf ſuited very well with the intentions he had in his head that night. Which way ſoever Matilda turn'd, he took care not to loſe ſight of her; but as ſhe kept cloſe to Alexis, neither he nor any one elſe had an opportunity of ſpeaking to her. I hover'd as near them as I could without being taken notice of, and it gave me a good deal of diverſion, to ſee the ſurpriſe this innocent country lady teſtified at hearing the freedom with which ſome people, who ſeem'd to be perfect ſtrangers, accoſted each other.

A gentleman croſſing the room with his maſk in his hand, was known to Alexis, who on ſight of him cry'd out to Matilda, 'Look yonder, my dear, 'there is Mr. Freeman; I never heard of his 'being in town: I will juſt ſtep and tell him where 'we lodge; do you ſit here till I come back.' He then ſeated her on a bench, and went haſtily after his friend, who had paſs'd into another room:—I

now

now doubted not but the huntſman would ſnatch his opportunity of entertaining Matilda, but I loſt ſight of him in an inſtant; he vaniſh'd, as it were, from the place, and I ſaw him no more. The fair ſhepherdeſs, however, was not to remain neglected; I found ſeveral advancing towards her, one of whom was the moſt groteſque, as well as diſagreeable figure I every beheld; his ſtature was far from what could be call'd tall; but the circumference of his carcaſe exceeded that of any three men in the whole aſſembly: his legs look'd like the pillars of a church porch, and when he mov'd, were at ſuch a diſtance from each other, that a boar of a moderate ſize might eaſily paſs between them without being incommoded: — he had on the habit of a Turkiſh baſhaw, which was the worſt, indeed, he could have choſe; his huge ears, diſcover'd by the ſhortneſs of his turban, hung upon his ſhoulders, as did the wallets under his chin upon his breaſt; in a word, he could have no deformity that the dreſs he was in did not ſhew to advantage.

This enormous creature had no ſooner reached the place where Matilda ſat, than he threw himſelf down by her on the bench, and accoſted her with language which I ſhould never forgive myſelf, nor expect to be forgiven by my readers, to repeat; but I was glad to find, by the whiſpers of ſome people behind me, that inſtead of a gentleman, as I at firſt took him for, he was no other than a bully at a noted brothel in Covent-Garden, and was known about town by the name of Lumper-Hammock. I cannot pretend to ſay whether this fellow was encourag'd by any other perſon to behave to Matilda in the manner he did, merely to put her ſpirits into a hurry, or whether he was inſtigated to it only by his own impudence and brutality: but whatever it might be, the ſituation of that poor lady was greatly to be pitied; — ſhe moved by little

and

and little as far from him as the bench would give her leave; but he ſtill follow'd, and would needs keep cloſe to her and perſecute her with his ribaldry; — ſometimes ſhe got up, and look'd round to ſee for her huſband, than ſat down again, not daring to leave the place for fear of miſſing him; but all the time ſhewed tokens of the utmoſt agitation of mind.

At length the blue Domine appear'd, on which ſhe ſtarted from her ſeat, and running to him, cry'd, —— 'Oh, my dear, I am glad you are 'come.' — He only replied, in a low voice, — 'Ay, ay, — let us be gone,' — and taking her by the hand led her haſtily away. I pleas'd myſelf with the thoughts of having ſeen Matilda ſafe under the protection of her huſband, and was equally ſo that he had diſcover'd little approbation of the maſquerade, by his leaving it at a time when the diverſion was at its height, and more company coming in than going out.

But the ſatisfaction I enjoy'd in both theſe points, vaniſh'd in a moment; Alexis return'd, his maſk was now off, and he paſs'd directly, to the place where he had left Matilda,—then ſtarted back, — confuſion and ſurpriſe overſpread his face; he threw his eyes wildly round the room, then ran through every part of it, and without conſidering how much he expoſed himſelf to the ridicule of that giggling aſſembly, aſk'd firſt of one and then of another, if they had ſeen a ſhepherdeſs in green and ſilver, and if they knew what was become of her. This ſtruck me with infinite concern, as it made me know Matilda had been deceived by the ſight of the blue Domine, and in ſpite of my unwillingneſs, to let him ſee I had come to a place where I had refuſed to accompany him, was juſt ſtepping forward to inform him of what had happen'd, when a lady hearing his enquiries ſaid, 'Sir,

'the

'the lady I ſaw with you in the dreſs you mention, 'went away a little while ago with a gentleman 'in a blue Domine, much the ſame as your own.' On which he cry'd out, 'Oh Heavens! what curſt miſtake is this!'

In uttering this exclamation, he flew out of the room like lightning, without ſtaying to thank the lady for her intelligence; — I follow'd as faſt as I could, and found him at the door of the houſe, encompaſſ'd with Hackney coachmen, chairmen, and link-boys, among whom he was vainly endeavouring to get ſome account of his loſt ſhepherdeſs; one of them, it ſeems, had ſaid he ſaw a lady in the habit he deſcrib'd go into a coach with a gentleman, but could tell nothing either of the figure of the coach, or where it was order'd to drive. Finding no information could be gained in the place where he was, he withdrew from the crowd, as I ſuppoſe, to conſider what method he ſhould purſue; for he continued in a fix'd poſture for two or three minutes, leaning againſt ſome rails before an adjacent houſe. My heart bled for him, and if I had been capable of offering him either advice or conſolation, would not have kept at the diſtance I did; but the accident that had happen'd was without a remedy, and I had often obſerved, that to preach up moderation in the firſt guſts of paſſion ſerved but to inflame it more.

I thought there was no meaſures he could take that night, yet imagining he had ſomething in his head, was deſirous of ſeeing what event his cogitations would produce, I therefore laid hold of the opportunity I now had of ſtepping behind the cover of a hackney-coach in waiting, and girded on my Belt of Inviſibility, which I always carried in my pocket, in caſe any thing ſhould fall in my way to give me occaſion to make uſe of it. The influence of my valuable gift had but juſt taken effect, by being

being warm upon my body, when Alexis rouz'd himſelf out of his reſverie, and walked very faſt up the ſtreet; I kept pace with him 'till he came to the houſe where he lodg'd; the door being opened by his own footman, who ſat up for him, — 'Is 'my wife come home,' cry'd he? the fellow anſwering in the negative, and ſeeming ſomewhat ſurprized at this queſtion, he threw himſelf into the parlour, ſaying to himſelf: 'How mad a hope 'did I entertain, that ſhe might have found ſome 'means to eſcape the hands of her raviſher, and 'been here before me?—No, no, 'tis impoſſible; 'the villain doubtleſs will ſecure his prey:—curs'd, 'curs'd, maſquerade, invented by the fiends for the 'deſtruction of virtue.'

While he was thus ſpeaking, he tore off his Domine, with agonies not to be expreſs'd, and ſtamp'd it under his feet; then turning to his ſervant, went on thus:

Alexis. 'William, your miſtreſs is run away 'with, ſtolen from me by ſome villain in a Do-'mine like my own; ſhe is loſt for ever unleſs 'immediately recover'd; fly this minute to every 'tavern and bagnio you can think on, deſcribe 'her habit, enquire if ſuch a one with a perſon in 'a blue Domine enter'd there; be gone this in-'ſtant, while I run to a juſtice of peace, and get 'a warrant to ſearch in all ſuſpected places.'

William. What part of the town, ſir, do you think it moſt likely I ſhall hear of her?

Alexis. Alas, I am as ignorant of that as you; but all parts muſt be ſearch'd; fly then, good William; and, do you hear, aſk every hackney-coachman you meet with if he ſet any ſuch perſons down, and where: — away, I ſay, ſtay not to conſider, — a moment may confirm her ruin and my diſhonour.

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The fellow obey'd without making any farther reply; but I perceiv'd by his countenance, was not very well contented with the errand he was ſent upon; and Alexis went out of the houſe at the ſame time he did, in order to have recourſe to a magiſtrate in this exigence, as he had ſaid he would. I had no inclination to follow either maſter or man, on an expedition which promiſed ſo little ſucceſs, therefore made all the haſte I could to my own apartment, very much fatigued in body, yet much more ſo in mind, at the unfortunate miſtake poor Matilda had fallen into, and which I had all the reaſon in the world to fear would be attended with the moſt dreadful conſequences.

CHAP. II.

Contains the concluſion of a narrative, which I am certain there is not one perſon in the world who can read without being filled with the moſt poignant remorſe, unleſs he is as dead to all ſenſe of humanity as of honour.

MY impatience to know if Matilda was yet come home, or if the reſearches of Alexis had gain'd him any information concerning her, made me reſolve to go to his lodgings in the morning; but whether I ſhould make this viſit in my Viſible or Inviſible capacity I was for ſome time at a loſs; — at laſt it ſeem'd moſt eligible to appear in *propria perſona*, as if I came only to aſk ſome queſtions concerning the maſquerade, and how they approved of that diverſion, as it was the firſt time they partook of it; and alſo to take no notice of my being apprized of any thing that had happen'd there, unleſs he related it to me himſelf, which I did not much doubt of his doing. Accordingly I went,

went, and upon my entering into the dining-room, Alexis ran to me, and began the recital of his misfortune in this pathetic exclamation: 'Oh, my 'friend, I am undone, and ruined for ever!— 'the author, giver, and partaker of all my happineſs is loſt! torn from me by ſome laſcivious, 'ſome inhuman villain; and him whom yeſterday 'you beheld the moſt bleſt of men, you now ſee 'the moſt accurſed, and moſt wretched of all 'created beings!'

He then proceeded to inform me, as well as the diſtractions of his thoughts would give him leave, of the method he had taken for the recovery of his loſt treaſure; how he had paſs'd the whole night and that morning in ſearch of her, and that all his enquiries had been fruitleſs.

I then adviſed him to put an advertiſement in the papers, deſcribing the ſhape and ſtature of Matilda, with all the particulars of her dreſs, and offering a handſome reward to any one who ſhould give information of the place at which ſhe alighted out of a hackney-coach, in company with a gentleman in a blue Domine, between the hours of twelve and one. —'This you may do, ſaid I, without men-'tioning any name, except that of the perſon to 'whom ſuch intelligence may be brought; and 'tis 'very likely, either the coachman who carried her, 'or ſome one who might be about the door where 'ſhe was ſet down, or even the ſervants of the 'houſe will, for the ſake of the gratuity, make 'that diſcovery which all your perſonal enquiries 'might not be able to obtain.'

I had no ſooner ended, than a ſudden dawn of chearfulneſs gleam'd upon his languid face, and to ſhew how much he approv'd of the thought, took pen and paper, and immediately wrote in almoſt the ſame terms I had expreſs'd it; ſpecifying, at the ſame time, a coffee-houſe where the reward

ſhould

ſhould be paid on the requeſted intelligence being brought. After this, nature, who will not be denied her rites, whatever vexations may intervene to rob her of them, ſpread a certain drowſineſs upon his eyelids, which I perceiving, perſuaded him to favour, and on my promiſing to come again the ſame evening, he lay down on the bed, and left me at liberty to purſue my inclinations.

As I had now no engagement upon my hands, and had not been at White's for a conſiderable time, it was now my full deſign to go thither, imagining it might not be improbable but I might hear ſomething of Matilda; but as I had ſome very good reaſons not to appear in that place, I ſtepp'd into the firſt nook I found in my way, and put on my Belt of Inviſibility. I was but juſt equipp'd, and paſſing on to my intended rout, when I ſaw a chair, with the curtains cloſe drawn, ſtop at a few paces before me; I ſhould have taken no notice of this, if one of the fellows had not lifted up the top, and told the perſon in it, that he had forgot whether it were the Red or the Green Lamps; the anſwer was given in a voice which I preſently knew to be Matilda's; and if I had not ſo well remembered, as I did, the accents, I ſhould have ſuſpected it was no other than herſelf, by her ſaying, 'The Two Green Lamps.'

On finding it was ſhe, the reader will eaſily believe, I had more curioſity to ſee the interview between her and Alexis, than any thing elſe I could have in my head; — I followed the chair 'till it came to the houſe, and on the door being opened ſlipp'd in with it.—On her alighting, Mrs. Soberton, who was miſtreſs of the houſe, ran out of the parlour, and was beginning to teſtify her joy at her return, tho' mingled with ſome demonſtrations of ſurprize, to ſee her in the condition ſhe was, which, indeed, was deplorable enough; her head without

any

a ny other covering than a handkerchief careleſly tied over her diſhevell'd hair, her garments torn, her eyes ſwell'd with tears, every feature diſtorted, and all the tokens of diſtraction and deſpair about her. She made no anſwer to what the good gentlewoman ſaid, but, after throwing ſome money to the chairmen, ran haſtily up into the dining-room, where flinging herſelf on a ſettlee, ſhe cry'd out, 'Where is A-'lexis!'—to which Mrs. Soberton, who had fol-'low'd as well as myſelf, replied, —'Oh, ma-'dam, you cannot imagine what trouble both he 'and all of us have had on your account.'

I know not whether that unhappy lady would have declared to Mrs. Soberton any part of what had befallen her or not; for Alexis, who either had not fallen aſleep, or was eaſily awak'd, heard his wife's voice, and came flying out of the chamber that inſtant;— Mrs. Soberton, diſcreetly judging that they might not chuſe to have a third perſon witneſs of their diſcourſe, went directly down ſtairs; but the Inviſible remain'd, and his wonderful Tablets receiv'd the impreſſion of the following dialogue between them:

Matilda. Oh, Alexis, why did you leave me!

Alexis. Why did you leave the place where I deſired you to wait for my return!

Matilda. I ſtirred not from it but to follow you, as I then thought.

Alexis. Confuſion!—How could you be ſo miſtaken!

Matilda. Alas, I had no apprehenſion of the deception put upon me! his habit was exactly like yours; his ſtature the ſame; he ſpoke in a low voice; but if he had not, my ſpirits were in too much agitation at the impudence of a fellow who had but juſt before accoſted me, to have diſtinguiſh'd the difference.

Alexis.

Alexis. Oh, my torn heart — But ſay, — Who is the villain that betray'd you! — Where were you carryed!'

Matilda. Alas, the precautions he took has left me ignorant of both; and all I know is that I am undone.

Alexis. Diſtraction! — undone, and not know by whom! nor even in what place! all means for my revenge barr'd up! yet perhaps I may be able to diſcover ſomething, ſpeak therefore, — tell me in an inſtant all the particulars of the ſtory!

Matilda. I will, though every word will ſtab me to the ſoul, and inflict anew the ſhock I have undergone.

Alexis. No preparations; be quick, and anſwer my demand at once.

Matilda. Have patience then; for while you look ſo terrible I cannot ſpeak.

Alexis. You cannot think I would hurt you; ſpeak then, and break at once the heart of thy wretched huſband!

Matilda. Oh, which way ſhall I begin! — how end!

Alexis. Keep me not on the rack!

Matilda. Soon as I ſaw the counterfeit Alexis approach, I roſe to meet him, and on his bidding me come, and ſtretching forth his hand, I gave him mine, glad to find myſelf conducted from that mingled crowd, which I had ſeen too much of to deſire to continue any longer with;—we went into a coach, where I begun to tell him how I had been affronted by an ugly huge man in a Turkiſh habit; but he made no anſwer either to that or any other idle prate I entertain'd him with, 'till the coach ſtopp'd, and he handed me into a houſe, the entry of which was full of men, who were running backwards and forwards with candles in their hands, and ſeemed very buſy: I aſk'd where we were going,

ing, he ſtill made no reply; but after a ſhort whiſper to one of the fellows, led me up ſtairs.

Alexis. 'Sdeath! why did you go! — then was your time to have cry'd out for reſcue!

Matilda. What, from my huſband! I could not as yet know him from any other than yourſelf: I was, indeed, a little ſurpriſed at this behaviour; but imagin'd it was owing to ſome little whim you had taken into your head, on purpoſe to laugh at my ſimplicity. Being warm with having my maſk on ſo long, I pluck'd it off as ſoon as we got into the room, but he clapp'd it on again, a man being then juſt entering with a bottle and glaſſes in his hand, which having ſet down on a table, he immediately withdrew; my conductor then bolted the door, and running towards me, ſaid, — 'Now, my angel, I may feaſt my eye with all 'that heaven of beauty, which, while beneath 'a cloud, attracted my admiration, and you be-'hold the man who from this happy moment de-'votes himſelf entirely to your charms.' — With theſe words he took off both mine and his own vizard; — I ſhrieked, and ſurely had fainted with the fright, if an equal proportion of rage had not kept up my ſpirits.

Alexis. What ſaid he then?

Matilda. A thouſand romantic lyes, ſuch as I have read in plays and novels, which I anſwered only with revilings, till perceiving my juſt ſcorn had no effect upon him, I had recourſe to tears and entreaties; told him I was a married woman, that I had a huſband dearer to me than my ſoul, and by whom I was as much belov'd, and conjur'd him not to detain me.

Alexis. Did not this move him?

Matilda. Oh no, not in the leaſt, the audacious wretch but laughed at this remonſtrance. — ſaid that I was a fool, and knew not the true intereſt

tereſt of my ſex, but that he would inſtruct me better, and make me happy tho' againſt my will.

Alexis. Execrable Dog! but go on.

Matilda. You may eaſily believe, that he who could ſpeak ſuch words, would alſo accompany them with actions of the ſame nature: —I reſiſted all I could the indecent liberties he took,— called Heaven and earth to my aſſiſtance, but in vain; — I was at at laſt overpower'd:—in the midſt of tears, reproaches, ſwoonings, he effected his brutal purpoſe, and made me the moſt miſerable of women.

Alexis. Moſt miſerable, indeed! —After this, I ſuppoſe, he would have ſuffered you to depart?

Matilda. Can you think me vile enough to continue one moment in the preſence of that deteſted monſter, when I was at liberty to leave him! — This, indeed, is cruel. — Oh Alexis! I hate myſelf for what I have been compelled to ſuffer, do not you hate me too!

Alexis. Oh, 'tis too much for man to bear! Yet one thing more, Matilda, deſcribe, as near as poſſible, the features and complexion of this inhuman raviſher.

Matilda. Alas, the horror I was in from the firſt moment I found myſelf in the power of a ſtranger hinder'd me from taking any great notice; — all I can ſay is, that he had dark eyes, a clear and ruddy ſkin, and though his behaviour render'd him odious to me, with others I believe he may paſs for handſome.

Alexis. Young, I ſuppoſe.

Matilda. About five or ſix and twenty, as far as I can judge.

Alexis. Had he the appearance of a man of rank and fortune?

Matilda. Every thing I ſaw about him, which properly belong'd to himſelf, beſpoke him ſuch; —but

—but doubly diſguiſed.—Did you not take notice of an huntſman at the maſquerade?

Alexis. Yes, and remember he always kept near us. Was he the raviſher?

Matilda. The ſame; he told me he had his eye upon me from the firſt moment I came in, and when he ſaw you left me, ran and procured a Domine as like your's he could get, in hopes I might be, as alas I really was, deceived by that fatal habit.

Alexis. 'Tis well; I may perhaps hunt him.

The eyes of Alexis ſeemed to flaſh fire while he uttered theſe words; after which he ſtood muſing for ſome time, — then turning to his wife, who ſtill ſat weeping in the ſame poſture ſhe had thrown herſelf into at his entrance, ſpoke thus to her:

Alexis. Riſe, Matilda, retire to your chamber, and endeavour to compoſe yourſelf to reſt.

Matilda. What ſo early? — 'tis not yet ſix o'clock.

Alexis. No matter, your condition requires it, you have wak'd too long, therefore pray go.

Matilda. Will you come too?

Alexis. Do not expect me, I have much to think upon, and muſt be alone; there is a fermentation in my mind which muſt have time to ſettle, — to-morrow I may be at more eaſe; — I pray you then to give me liberty this night.

With this ſhe took a candle and withdrew; but with a look and geſture ſo truly pity-moving, that if a painter had been to draw the picture of Deſpair, he could not have copied from an original more ſtriking.

He then called for Mrs. Soberton, told her his wife had been very much frighted, and was indiſpoſed, ſo begg'd ſhe would aſſiſt her in any thing ſhe might ſtand in need of. She made no reply,

but

but went out of the room, I ſuppoſe, to do what he requeſted of her: I was about to follow her, but ſeeing Alexis put on his wig, which he had pluck'd off when he went to lie down, thought he was going on ſome expedition which might be worth my taking the pains to explore: to this end I ſlipp'd down ſtairs while he was taking up his ſword and hat, got out of the houſe before him, diveſted myſelf of my Belt, became viſible, and met him ſome few paces diſtant. I told him I was returning to his lodgings according to my promiſe, and affected ſome ſurprize at ſeeing him abroad: he ſeemed pleaſed that he had not miſſed me, and repeated in a few words the ſum of what I have been relating; adding, that he now flatter'd himſelf with being able to trace out the perſon who had injur'd him, by the deſcription Matilda had given of him; and then intreated I would be ſo good as to accompany him in the ſearch he was about to make; to which requeſt I readily conſented.

I found his ſcheme was, to enquire among thoſe people who let out dreſſes for the maſquerade, if any account could be given of a gentleman, who the night before had hired firſt the habit of a huntſman, and afterwards a blue Domine. The thing, indeed, ſeem'd feaſible enough in itſelf, though it did not anſwer expectation. We went to ſeveral ſhops without receiving the leaſt information; and all we could learn was, that a gentleman, habited like a huntſman, had come in a very great hurry for a blue Domine, which had not been return'd 'till about half an hour before our coming, but the name or quality of the perſon who hired it, the woman proteſted ſhe knew nothing of. Alexis then demanded, ſomewhat haſtily, who it was had brought it back: ſhe ſmiled both at this interrogatory, and the manner in which it was made, and replied, that ſhe was talking to cuſto-

mers at that time in the ſhop; but if ſhe had been leſs engag'd, ſhe ſhould ſcarce have taken any notice: — 'For (ſaid ſhe) provided we have our 'goods again, and are paid for the uſe of them, it 'is not our buſineſs to examine farther.'

Here ended the fruitleſs ſearch of *Alexis*: — he had now no ſhadow of hope for diſcovering the raviſher, but in the advertiſement I had perſuaded him to get inſerted in the news papers, and his deſpair became ſo outrageous, that it was with much difficulty I prevailed upon him to go home. I went with him, fearing, if he was left alone in the ſtreet, he might be guilty of ſome extravagancy. It was one of the moſt fine froſty nights I had ever ſeen, and while we were knocking at the door, he look'd up towards the ſky, and, with a voice denoting the extremeſt bitterneſs of heart, burſt into this exclamation: —"How many thou-'ſand twinkling ſtars are there, yet not one 'among them all a friend to me, or poor undone 'Matilda.'

I went home with him, but privately gave William a caution not to go to ſleep, but keep near his maſter, and be attentive to all his motions, in order to prevent any fatal effect of the preſent diſtraction of his mind. I then went home, but with an anxiety for this truly worthy, though ill-fated pair, that made me quit my bed very early next morning, with a reſolution to exert my utmoſt endeavours for the mitigation of their ſorrows, and, if poſſible, to reconcile *Alexis* to a misfortune which was without a remedy; but, unluckily for my deſign, a perſon came to ſpeak with me about ſome buſineſs which detain'd me 'till almoſt twelve o'clock.

On my arrival at the place where I ſo much wiſh'd to be, I found *Alexis* juſt come in before me: he appear'd with a countenance much more com-

compoſed than the night before, but very penſive and melancholy: he preſently acquainted me, however, with the occaſion of his having been abroad; — it was this: — He told me he had paſs'd the whole night in conſidering how he ſhould act in relation to Matilda, and finding it a thing inconſiſtent with his honour to ſuffer her to remain in town after what had happen'd, he reſolved to ſend her immediately into the country, and was juſt return'd from hiring a poſt chaiſe for that purpoſe. The reaſon he gave for his proceeding in this manner, was as follows: — 'She 'cannot remain here and be ſhut up; ſhe muſt 'appear ſometimes; and who can tell but that 'in ſome unlucky minute ſhe may be ſeen by the 'very villain who has ruin'd her, and who, either 'through curioſity, or the deſire of renewing the 'gratification of his vicious flame, may diſcover 'whoſe wife ſhe is, and wherever he ſees me, point 'me to his lewd companions for the wretch he has made me.'

I had nothing to offer in oppoſition to what he ſaid on this ſcore; for indeed I thought it very proper they ſhould both retire into the country; ſo replied, that I was glad I had call'd that morning, otherwiſe I ſhould not have had the opportunity of wiſhing them a good journey: — to which he haſtily rejoin'd, — 'I ſhall not go.' — 'How! '(cry'd I) ſomewhat ſurpriſed, do you ſend away 'Matilda, and ſtay behind yourſelf!' A deep ſigh was the firſt anſwer he gave: but the teſtimony of his diſcontent was preſently ſucceeded by theſe words: 'Yes, my friend, ſhe muſt go with-'out me; two days ago nothing was ſo precious to 'me as her preſence: I liv'd, indeed, but in her 'ſight; every glance, every look ſhe gave, ſhot 'pleaſure to my heart: — but now, alas! the 'happy moments are fled, and I can regard her as

'no other than the ruin'd reliques of the woman 'once ſo dear to me.'

It was in vain I repreſented to him, that as I doubted not but he was perfectly convinced of the purity of Matilda's mind, he ought not to love her leſs for the violence her perſon had ſuſtained: he owned the juſtneſs of my reaſons, but could not prevail on himſelf to be governed by them; and when I urged the cruelty of ſending her ſo long a journey without any companion to alleviate her ſorrows, he made me this reply: —'She does not go 'alone; her waiting-maid, who ſoon after our ar-'rival in town, was obliged to be removed on ac-'count of the ſmall-pox, is now quite recovered, 'and came home laſt night: this girl has attended 'Matilda for ſome years, and I know will be very 'careful of her.'

While we were diſcourſing, the chaiſe came to the door, on which Alexis call'd to have the luggage put in, and his wife to make herſelf ready. I aſk'd him if he thought it proper I ſhould take my leave of Matilda before her departure; he replied, that it was a ceremony which he believed ſhe would gladly be diſpenſed with from receiving, in her preſent unhappy ſituation; but begg'd I would ſtay in the dining-room 'till he had diſpatched this diſagreeable affair. With theſe words he went out of the room, and I remain'd where I was: in leſs than half a quarter of an hour, looking through the window, I ſaw the diſconſolate Matilda go out of the houſe, ſupported on one ſide by Alexis, and on the other by her attendant. I could not ſee her face; but her motions, and the diſtracted air with which ſhe threw herſelf into the chaiſe, were enough to convince me of the extreme wretchedneſs of her condition.

Alexis returned to me in a ſituation little leſs pity-moving, yet could not my heart altogether abſolve

abſolve him for this laſt part of his behaviour to Matilda: it was now, however, a time to apply rather balms than corroſives to his bleeding and deſpairing mind; I therefore ſaid every thing in my power to adminiſter conſolation to him, but all my endeavours that way were unſucceſsful; and though I ſtaid with him the greateſt part of the day, had the mortification to leave him as I found him.

Oh! had the dark unknown beheld the ſad effects his wild inordinate deſires produced, he ſurely could not have ſuſtain'd the ſhock, but muſt have revenged upon himſelf the miſchiefs he had brought upon two worthy perſons, ſo lately bleſs'd, ſo truly loving and beloved!

CHAP. III.

Conſiſts of ſome farther particulars relative to the preceding adventure; with two letters wrote by that unfortunate lady to her husband in her exile.

I AM very much afraid that Alexis will ſtand but little juſtified in the opinion of my fair readers for his conduct towards Matilda: they will doubtleſs ſay, that the love he pretended to have for her had taken but a ſhallow root in his heart, when it could be ſhaken by a misfortune which ſhe had no way contributed to bring upon herſelf. They will, perhaps, alſo add, that after ſhe had with ſo much ſimplicity, ſome may think folly too, revealed to him the whole of what had befallen her, it was not only unkind, but highly ungenerous and cruel in him to abandon her to deſpair, at a time when ſhe had ſo much need of the tendereſt compaſſion and conſolation.

I muſt confeſs, indeed, that theſe accuſations have the ſtrongeſt appearance of reaſon on their

ſide; yet I muſt take upon me, notwithſtanding, to aver, that how much a paradox ſoever it may ſeem to ſome, Love, when in exceſs, may, on more occaſions than one, produce the ſame effects as hate. Certain it is, that it was chiefly owing to the too refin'd delicacy of the paſſion Alexis was poſſeſs'd of for Matilda, that made them both ſo greatly wretched: the thoughts that another, tho' by force, had revell'd in her charms, deprived thoſe charms of all their reliſh, and ſicken'd every wiſh. When we have been talking together on this head, often have I heard him in the utmoſt bitterneſs of heart, expreſs himſelf in theſe terms:— 'I ſtill adore her 'mind;—I know it is all compoſed of ſweetneſs, 'innocence, and truth: but, oh! the blemiſh caſt 'upon her perſon cannot be waſh'd off but with 'the villain's blood; and unleſs fate allows me the 'means of doing her and myſelf that juſtice, can 'never look upon her but as the ghoſt of my once 'dear wife.'

Finding that to prevail on him to live with Matilda as a wife was utterly impracticable, at leaſt 'till time had a little mellow'd the aſperity of his reſentment, I forbore any farther ſpeech on that head, believing, that if a change in Matilda's favour ſhould ever happen, it muſt come wholly of himſelf, and not by the arguments of another.

It will be eaſy for the reader to judge of how little efficacy the perſuaſions of any friend could be to move him, when thoſe of the tender, the endearing, the ſo lately ador'd Matilda, prov'd in vain, which abundantly appears by the many letters ſhe ſent to him after her retirement, two only of which I got an opportunity of tranſcribing: the firſt was wrote immediately on her arrival at their country ſeat.

My

'My dear, dear ALEXIS,

'I am a ſufficient proof, that grief is not ſo fatal 'as ſome people would repreſent it, ſince I live to 'tell you I am ſafely arrived at ********; — 'yes, —I am return'd to that once bliſsful ſcene 'of ſoft delights, of pure and virtuous love:— 'But, oh! that Heaven is fled, a ſad reverſe ſup-'plies its place, and whereſoever I turn my eyes, 'horrors inſtead of joys riſe to my diſtracted 'view! I remember, that when you turn'd me 'from you, your laſt words were, Be comforted, 'Matilda. Alas! you well know, without Alexis 'there is no comfort for Matilda: your preſence 'is the only balſam can aſſuage the tortures of 'my agonizing heart! If then, indeed, you wiſh 'me leſs the wretch I am, let me not linger 'long in a baniſhment more cruel than death! 'quit that deteſted town, fly to my relief, and at 'leaſt join with me in bewailing what is paſt a 'remedy.

'But, oh! I have too much cauſe to fear you 'have withdrawn all your affection from me, and 'am doubly miſerable in a conſciouſneſs of being 'render'd unworthy to retain it. Yet had ſickneſs, 'or any other accident, deprived me of that little 'beauty nature has beſtow'd upon me, and made 'me become lame, or blind, or crooked, I flatter 'myſelf you would have lov'd me ſtill; you would 'then have pitied and cheriſh'd me in your boſom; 'and ſure, the misfortune that has befallen me, 'was as far removed from my ſeeking, as any of 'thoſe I have mention'd. I will not, however, 'anticipate the doom I ſo much dread; will not 'give way to apprehenſions ſo diſtracting to my-'ſelf, and I hope injurious to you: I know you are 'generous and juſt, and will endeavour to aſſure 'myſelf of thoſe noble principles, even without

'the aid of tenderneſs, will not permit you to hate 'me, to throw me off for ever, for my perſon 'having ſuſtain'd a violence, to which I am per-'ſuaded you are convinced my mind was incapable 'of conſenting. I will believe that you feel all 'my woes, participate in my anguiſh, and that my 'pen ought rather to flow with words of conſo-'lation than reproach. Yet if it is ordain'd, that 'we muſt both be wretched, let us be wretched 'together; let us mingle our tears, and inter-'changeably echo back each other's ſighs; let us 'indulge deſpair, recal the memory of thoſe bliſs-'ful hours we once enjoy'd; compare the preſent 'with the paſt, and join in curſes on the baſe, the 'inhuman author of our woes! But whither does 'my inconſiderate paſſion lead me! — does it be-'come the love, the tenderneſs, the duty of a wife, 'to wiſh you ſhould partake my ruin! — No, — 'ſince I can no longer contribute to your happi-'neſs, rather forget, renounce, abandon me for 'ever! — Yet, oh! 'tis hard; — my brain grows 'wild on the reflection; — I can proceed no far-'ther. — Pity me, my moſt dear, my moſt ador'd 'Alexis! pity,—oh! pity,

'The undone,

'The loſt MATILDA!

'P.S. If theſe diſtracting lines have any power 'to move you, — if any remains of ſoft com-'paſſion towards me ſtill dwell within your breaſt, 'write to me by the firſt poſt; — fix, I beſeech 'you, my uncertain fate. — Oh, that I ſhould 'live to ſtand in need of entreaties to hear from 'you!'

When Alexis ſhewed me the above, he ſeemed all diſſolved in a flood of love and tenderneſs; yet I believe the anſwer he ſent to it was dictated in terms

terms not altogether ſo ſatisfactory to Matilda as the preſent diſturbance of her mind required. Here follows the ſecond melancholy epiſtle of that unfortunate lady.

'My for ever dear, tho' unkind ALEXIS,

'WITH what anxiety have I watched the arrival of the poſt! how counted the tedious minutes as they glided on! how trembled between hope and fear on every knock given at the gate, while in expectation of a letter from you!—at laſt it came:—but, oh! I am not more at eaſe! Wherefore, Alexis, do you keep me in this cruel ſuſpenſe?—I aſk'd no impoſſibilities of you,—deſir'd you not to love me ſtill,—I only begg'd the deciſion of my fate; and ſure, that is not a requeſt too much for me to make, or you to grant!

'My father, uncles, all my kindred and acquaintance, nay, our very ſervants, ſtand amaz'd to ſee me here without you; they perceive my alter'd looks, and with officious love enquire into the cauſe. All the anſwer I can make is, that the air of London not agreeing with my conſtitution, I hurried back before ſome buſineſs you had in town would permit you to return. Theſe excuſes may paſs current for a time, but cannot do ſo long: I conjure you, therefore, by all you have to hope, or fear, or wiſh, not to expoſe yourſelf and me to conjectures which cannot be to the advantage of either of our characters. Pronounce my doom, ſay that you will return, and live with me, in all appearance, as before; or ſcruple not to let me know you have reſolved on an eternal ſeparation, that I may retire at once to ſome dark corner of the world, and ſhut myſelf up from pity and contempt. I know this ought to have

'been thought upon before you obliged me to re-
'move from London; but both of us were in too
'much confuſion at the time of parting to give
'our cooler reaſon room to operate: we have,
'ſince, however, had leiſure to reflect on what
'was proper to be done in our unhappy circum-
'ſtances; and I flatter myſelf you will not think
'me too preſuming in being the firſt to mention
'it.

'Oh, Alexis! imagine not that when I urge you
'to this eclairciſement, I am ſo vain as to ſooth
'my fond heart with a belief, that ſince the dread-
'ful accident you ever can love me as before;
'— no, I rather expect my ſentence will be that
'of an everlaſting baniſhment; perhaps it is al-
'ready ſign'd within your breaſt, and the com-
'paſſion you have for me alone delays the execu-
'tion. If this ſhould be the caſe, — throw aſide
'that cruel mercy which conceals it: — grief and
'deſpair has given me fortitude to bear the worſt
'of ills, and ſure there can be none half ſo dread-
'ful to me as ſeeing you no more; — ſo much
'the better for my eternal peace, as it will the
'ſooner rid me of the burthen of a hated life;
'but I will trouble you no more than to renew
'my petition of knowing in your next letter what
'it is you have in effect decreed for the inno-
'cently criminal

'MATILDA.'

'P.S. Your old acquaintance and fellow-colle-
'gian, Mr. L——, has juſt now ſent to enquire
'when you are expected down; — he deſigns,
'it ſeems, to ſet up at the next General Election
'for the Borough of *******, and greatly de-
'pends on the intereſt you have in that place;
'— I ſuppoſe you will ſhortly receive a letter
'from himſelf on the occaſion: oh! may the

'calls

'calls of friendſhip give weight to thoſe I have 'mentioned, and influence you to return.'

I happen'd to be with Alexis at the time of his receiving this: he firſt read it to himſelf, then communicated it to me, and when he had finiſh'd, cry'd out with an extraordinary emotion, — 'Poor Ma-'tilda! unhappy charming woman! with what 'enchanting eloquence does ſhe plead againſt her-'ſelf! how ſweetly labour to oppoſe what ſhe moſt 'wiſhes to obtain!'

As I found the ſtrongeſt reaſon in the arguments urged in Matilda's letter, I muſt confeſs that I was at a loſs to comprehend what he meant by ſpeaking in this manner, therefore deſir'd he would explain himſelf, which he immediately did in theſe terms: 'O, friend, the more I diſcover of her me-'rit, the leſs I am able to forget the violation of 'her honour; I muſt ceaſe to love her as I do, 'muſt bring myſelf to look upon her with the 'ſame indifference that moſt huſbands do upon 'their wives, before I can ſupport, with any to-'lerable degree of patience, the thoughts that an-'other has poſſeſs'd her.' Thus did he always talk whenever we were alone; and had Matilda known his ſentiments, I believe it would be a moot-point whether ſhe would not rather have choſe a ſeparation than to live with him, after he had reduced himſelf to ſuch a ſtate of inſenſibility.

He now indeed began to give great indications, that he had nothing more at heart than to loſe all remembrance, not only of the injury done to Matilda, but of herſelf alſo. By very ſwift degrees he became the reverſe of what he was before his going to that fatal maſquerade: the pleaſures of the bottle, and the converſation of the looſer part of womankind, divide too much of his time between them; and he ſeeks in riots and debaucheries his re-

lief from melancholy. I am told, however, that he is at preſent preparing to ſet out for ******: but what ſatisfaction can the virtuous Matilda receive from his return thus transform'd, thus debaſed in morals and behaviour from the man ſhe had ſo dearly loved, and who was once ſo worthy her eſteem?

How ſad a reverſe has a few weeks made in the condition of this lately happy pair! — Surely the wretch, for ſo I muſt call him, be he of what degree or rank ſoever, who for the ſake of gratifying the fleeting pleaſure of a moment, has brought this ruin on them, ought never to be forgiven in this world, whatever a ſincere contrition, if he is capable of it, may entitle him to in the next.

CHAP. IV.

The Author having found ſomething in his rambles, which he ſuppoſes may be of value to the owner, condeſcends to take upon him the office of a Town-Cryer; but waves the ceremony of the great O-Yes.

HAppening one morning to wake more early than ordinary, I quitted my bed, and the weather being fine, and my humour more inclined to ſerioufneſs than gaiety, I took a little walk into Hyde-Park, not with the leaſt expectation of making any diſcovery of other people's affairs, but merely to think of my own with more liberty than I could do at home. I met no living creature in my way, except ſome birds that perch'd upon the twigs of the leaveleſs trees, and in melodious notes chanted forth praiſes to the approaching ſpring: theſe rather indulging meditation, I paſs'd ſlowly on by the ſide of the Serpentine River, where my eyes were attracted

tracted with the ſight of a white ſattin pocket lying juſt before me, I ſuppoſe it might have been dropp'd from ſome lady's ſide the night before, for on my taking it up, I found it extremely damp with dew. I look'd upon this as a lawful prize, and that I had a right to keep it, at leaſt 'till I could find ſomebody that had a better title; I therefore tied it up in my handkerchief, and after having finiſhed my walk took it home with me, where my impatience did not ſuffer me to continue long without examining it. I ſhall give a faithful inventory of all the particulars, reſerving only one in petto, in order to prevent being impoſed upon by any fictitious claimant.

Money being the chief idol of mankind, I ſhall give that the preference, and begin with the purſe, which had in it five gold ducats, a leaden French ſhilling, a bent half crown, and a medal of the Duke of Cumberland in copper, very curious, but by ſome accident had been crack'd, and the impreſſion in ſeveral parts pretty much eraſed. The next thing that preſented itſelf was a very ſmall pocket-book, which I ſhall forbear to deſcribe, as well as make any mention of the memorandums it contained, to any perſon in the world but to the lady who wrote and ſhall come to demand them. There was alſo a chryſtal ſmelling-bottle half full of Sal Armoniac, a tortoiſe-ſhell ſnuff-box, rimm'd with gold, and a naked Venus painted on the inſide.

But the moſt valuable part of this cargo, at leaſt according to my opinion, was ſome papers, not Bank-bills, but letters, and other writings more deſerving the attention of the public, and which I ſhall make no ſcruple to inſert, as they gradually fell under my inſpection; eſpecially as all of them having been ſent under covers, which were not in the packet, the name of the lady to whom they were directed can only be gueſſed at.

LET-

LETTER I.

'MADAM,

'I Now ſend you the catalogue you have ſo 'often requeſted; but intreat you will be ſo good 'as not to let any one ſoul in the world know you 'had it from him who has the honour to be, with the greateſt reſpect, &c.

The name ſubſcribed to this had been torn off, either by deſign or accident; but the paper which accompanied it was perfect and entire. Here follows a faithful tranſcript.

A CATALOGUE *of ſome very ſcarce and curious pieces, in proſe and verſe, all wrote by ſome of the moſt eminent hands.*

1. THE Art of Pleaſing in Converſation. An Heroic Poem.—By the E— of C——.

2. An Eſſay on Power. Wrote originally in High Dutch, and now tranſlated by a perſon of diſtinction into Engliſh. — Bound in red Turky, finely gilt and lettered.

3. The Virtues of Carmine, with a Recipe how to prepare it with ſucceſs, — *probatum eſt.* — By the C—— of C——. Gilt back and letter'd.

4. Patient Grizel. A Poem in ſix Cantos. — By the real C—— of C——. Bound in Calf, very plain.

5. The Politician defeated. A Novel. In three Parts. — By the E— of E——. Stitch'd in blue Paper.

6. The Croaker. A Tragi-comical Farce of one Act.—By I— R——.

7. Cookery Improv'd, after the Epicurean ſtile. —By a Club of Gentlemen. In ſheets.

8. The

8. The Chaſte Maid; or, A New Way to amuſe the Town. — A Comedy of three Acts, each ſufficient for a Winter Night's Entertainment.—By the facetious H— F——, Eſq;

9. Rules to chuſe a Wife; ſhewing the Abſurdity of all thoſe generally obſerved. — By Sir J— C——. In Boards.

10. A Philoſophical Definition of Card-Craft, upwards of forty years compiling. — By the very learned and moſt ingenious Profeſſor, Mr. H——e. Stitched in gilt Paper.

11. Frugality. A Poem. In nine Cantos. — By the C—— of B——. Bound in Vellum.

12. A Collection of Jeſts and Merry Phraſes, to keep young People's Heads from aching with more laborious Studies. — By a Tutor in the modiſh Sciences. Finely bound in blue Turky, gilt back and letter'd.

13. Try before you buy. A Poem after the manner of Hudibras. — By the E— of R——. In Boards.

14. The Charms of Novelty. A Pindaric Eſſay. — By Miſs C—— in Sheets.

15. The Pleaſures of Matrimony; or, Who would not be a Huſband? A Farce. — By L— V——. Stitch'd, and very much ſullied with often reading.

16. A Diſſertation on Fly's Eggs. —By the Preſident of a learned Society. In Boards.

17. Laugh and Lie Down. A Ballad Opera of three Acts. — By L— P——. Stitch'd in blue Paper.

18. An Eſſay to prove that true Honour is always concomitant with good Senſe. — By the E— of O. Bound in plain Turky.

19. Conjugal Love. A Paſtoral, of one continued Scene. — By the E— of N——. Printed on

on a new Elzevir letter, and neatly bound without tawdrineſs or affectation.

20. The Patriot. A ſecret Hiſtory. — By G— D——, Eſq; Bound in clouded Calf.

21. The Double Dealer; or, The Weſtminſter Diſappointment. A Farce of two Acts — By Sir G—— V——. Stitched in Cap Paper.

22. An Eulogy on Apoſtacy. — By L— G—. Bound in Calf and gilt back.

23. Love in a Bottle. A Poem, in three Cantos. — By the E— of M——. Stitch'd in blue Paper.

24. Redivivus; or Old Age and Gallantry reconciled. A humorous Farce of one Act.— By the E— of H——. Stitch'd.

25. An Exhortation to Hoſpitality to Foreigners, even though it ſhould happen to be deſtructive to the Liberties of the Natives. — By L— T——, as he delivered it at the Hay-Market. Bound in the French Taſte.

26. Criticiſms on the Play of — Rule a Wife and Have a Wife. — By L— P——. In Boards.

27. The Fox weary of Gooſe-hunting. A Fable. — By the D— of D——. Bound in Parchment.

28. The Lover's Catechiſm. A new Ballad.— By the celebrated Miſs A——.

29. An Infallible Remedy for curing the Scotch Itch without Bleeding.—By the D— of A——.

30. The Beauties of domeſtic Life, illuſtrated with Examples. A Paſtoral Eclogue. — By the D— of B—. Neatly bound.

31. Love levels all; or, A lucky Trip to Bath. An Epic Poem without any Epiſodes. — By C— B——. Printed on a half worn out letter, but very richly bound.

32 In-

32. Inſtructions for a Supplement to Arthur Collins's Peerage of England. — By L— L——. Stitched in Marble Paper.

33. Verſes in praiſe of Breeding. — By Miſs W——.

34. True Magnificence. An Heroic Poem. — By the D— of M——. Finely bound.

35. Love in a Coach. A true Secret Hiſtory. — By C—— V——. Stitch'd.

36. Second Thoughts beſt. A Philoſophical Treatiſe, dedicated to a Brother of the Horn. — By Mr. W——. Bound in Sheeps-ſkin.

37. The Triumvirate of Converts; — being a Series of Epiſtles on Moral and Religious Subjects, which paſs'd between L— T——, C—— G——, and Mrs. C——. In Boards.

38. The Eſcape. A Satire. Inſcrib'd to L— D—— M——, by a Well-wiſher to her Ladyſhip.

39. A Letter ſent with a Side of Veniſon to the celebrated Mrs. J—— D——, in the Piazza, Covent-Garden. — By L— T——e.

40. A Short Treatiſe concerning Public and Private Charities, proving to a Demonſtration, that the former are of much more Emolument to the Giver than the latter. — By L— E—— J——. Curiouſly bound with a Regiſter.

42. The Humiliation. A Poem. Addreſs'd to the Inexorables.—By L— G— S——. Stitched.

43. A Prophecy that Votes for Members of Parliament will fall to no Price at the next Weſtminſter Election. — By Sir W—— Y——.

Having folded and replaced this paper in the pocket whence I had taken it, I proceeded to the other.

LET-

LETTER II.

'DEAR MADAM,

'IT muſt be confeſs'd you are endow'd with a 'courage and reſolution ſuperior to what moſt of 'your ſex can boaſt of; but you muſt give me 'leave to ſay, at the ſame time, that in theſe af-'fairs we men run much the greater hazards; in 'caſe of a diſcovery, our perſons are liable to fall a 'ſacrifice to the reſentment of an injur'd huſband, 'and our fortunes ſure to be ruin'd by way of re-'paration of his diſgrace; whereas the worſt you 'have to fear is a divorce. The laws are favour-'able to wives, the portion you brought with you 'is either return'd, or an annuity equivalent; and 'as for the little ſhame you ſuſtain by ſuch a pro-'cedure, it is well aton'd for by your being freed 'from the loathſome careſſes of the man you hate, 'and at full liberty to purſue your inclinations 'with him you love.—Be aſſur'd, madam, I would 'venture much for the continuance of the bleſſing 'you permit me to enjoy; but I find the intercourſe 'between us begins to be ſuſpected, and you muſt 'therefore pardon me that I yield to neceſſity, 'and refrain my farther meetings with you, at 'leaſt for the preſent. I was yeſterday at Court, 'and heard ſome whiſpers, that your jealous cox-'comb would ſoon be ſent abroad; if ſuch a thing 'ſhould happen, as I have ſome pretty good reaſons 'to believe it will, I ſhall return with double tran-'ſport to your embraces, 'till then prudence 'obliges me to deny myſelf that happineſs; but 'at how great a diſtance ſoever I keep my perſon, 'I beg you will do me the juſtice to believe my 'heart is always with you, and that I can never 'ceaſe to be, with the greateſt ſincerity, &c.

'PHILETES.'

'P. S.

P.S. 'I would not have you harbour any unjuſt 'ſuſpicions, either of me or your fair friend, for 'upon my ſoul, I never had the leaſt deſign upon 'her in the way you mean; and you will find, 'whenever it is convenient for me to renew my 'devoirs to you, that I like no woman better than 'yourſelf. — Once more I bid you unwillingly 'adieu.'

LETTER III.

'DEAR CREATURE,

'YOUR Damon and my Strephon, as we call 'them; are both with me; they have found out 'the moſt charming place that ever was for us to 'ſcamper to, whenever we can delude the eyes of 'our impertinent gaolers. If you can find any ex-'cuſe to get looſe from yours, the rendezvous 'agreed upon is the banks of the Serpentine-river, 'juſt after ſun-ſet, whence we are to follow our 'leaders where they ſhall pleaſe to conduct us. 'Lady Fillup has a route to-night, you may tell 'your tyrant you are going there; but why ſhould 'I put pretences into a head ſo much more ſertile 'than my own? Fail not to come, however, if it 'be not a thing utterly impoſſible for human wit 'to accompliſh; but let us know your reſolution 'by the bearer. I am, &c.

'CORINNA.'

P.S. 'While I was writing the above, Damon, 'to ſhew either his love, or wit, or both, took up 'a pen, and employ'd it in the inclos'd.'

To my Soul's Treaſure.

Fly, charmer, fly, — leave home-bred cares behind,
With thoughts of coming joys, fill all your mind;

Let

Let ſmiling pleaſure wanton o'er your face,
And kindling tranſports, brighten ev'ry grace;
Each vein of mine beats high with love's alarms,
Haſte then, and lull me gently in your arms.

'I know I am a bad poet, but you will find me 'a better lover, and that your charms are capable 'of inſpiring me with more fire than all the ladies 'of Parnaſſus put together. I am, &c.

'DAMON.'

The letter of Philetés, and that of Corinna and Damon, being dated on the ſame day, diſcovered to me that the lady who received them was not quite inconſolable for the loſs of one lover, as ſhe had another in ſtore; and alſo that ſhe failed not to comply with the invitation of Damon, and that ſhe had dropp'd her pocket at the rendezvous appointed by Corinna.

I make no queſtion but the inquiſitive reader would be glad to know the name and rank of this ſo much admired lady; but as I can do no more, at moſt, than gueſs at either, I ſhould be loth to impoſe my bare and uncertain conjectures upon the public, for fear of a miſtake, and being guilty of the worſt of wrongs, that of prejudicing the character of an innocent perſon. — I wiſh every one would pay as much regard as myſelf to what Shakeſpear ſays on this occaſion:

Good name, in man or woman,
Is the immediate jewel of our ſouls:
Who ſteals my purſe, ſteals traſh, 'tis ſomething,
nothing;
'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been ſlave to thouſands;
But he who filches from me my good name,
Robs me of that which not enriches him,
And makes me poor indeed.

Could

Could I have formed even the moſt diſtant ſuppoſition to what place Strephon and Damon had conducted their ladies, I doubt not but my curioſity would have carried me thither, where my enquiries might perhaps, have gained me the ſatisfaction of knowing how much of the night theſe inamoratos had paſs'd together, and in what manner they had been entertained; but no mention being made of any thing farther than the place where they were to meet, I was obliged to content myſelf with what diſcoveries I had made, and ſo muſt the reader alſo.

I cannot conclude this chapter without an obſervation which has conſtantly occurr'd to me whenever any thing fell in my way of the kind I have been relating, which is this: As the wife has the honour of her huſband in keeping, it ſeems to me a moſt ungenerous and cruel addition to the crime of wronging his bed, when by public indiſcretions ſhe expoſes him to that contempt and ridicule which the world, though without the leaſt ſhadow of reaſon or juſtice, is always ſure to caſt upon the huſband of a tranſgreſſing wife.

I know very well, people are apt to ſay, that when a woman abandons herſelf to vice, ſhe preſently becomes utterly incapable of paying any regard to her own reputation, much leſs to that of her huſband's; and that it appears a much greater matter of ſurpriſe when they ſee women, as it muſt be confeſs'd many ſuch there are, who, without being criminal in fact, behave in ſuch a manner as to draw on themſelves the ſevereſt cenſures. Though I muſt allow that this too frequently happens, yet I cannot agree in opinion with thoſe who ſeem to wonder it ſhould be ſo, and look upon it as a kind of inconſiſtency in nature; I rather imagine that guilt is more likely to inſpire circumſpection; —a woman who knows herſelf culpable,

I ſhould expect to be very careful not to do any thing in public that might cauſe ſuſpicion of her being leſs reſerved in private; whereas a conſciouſneſs of innocence, eſpecially in a thoughtleſs diſpoſition, may eaſily render a woman unguarded, and leſs obſervant of thoſe decorums, which, though not eſſential to virtue, are doubtleſs neceſſary to reputation.

CHAP. V.

Turns chiefly upon the ſubject of education, and contains ſome things which the author is apprehenſive will not be very agreeable to the female part of his readers.

THE good or the ill fortunes of our whole lives chiefly depends on the firſt bent given to our minds in youth. — Impreſſions made in our early years take a deep root within us, grow up with us to maturity, become part of ourſelves, ſo that they may properly be called a ſecond nature, and are ſeldom, if ever, totally eradicated. According to one of our Engliſh poets,

Children like tender oſiers take the bow,
And as they firſt are faſhion'd, ſtill will grow.

For this reaſon it is that parents, unleſs they are very remiſs indeed, take ſo much pride in the education of their children, beſtowing on them every accompliſhment befitting their rank and circumſtances, and oftentimes more than will well agree with either; yet all this will not do, there are ſome previous ſteps to be taken, without which all the improvements we can make, from the leſſons of the moſt able maſters, will never render us worthy the eſteem of others, or truly happy in ourſelves, for

for any length of time. Pride, and an impatience of controul, are the firſt propenſities diſcoverable in human nature: if theſe are humour'd and indulged in their beginnings, which is indeed in our moſt early years, they will ſoon become too headſtrong and too turbulent to be afterwards reſtrain'd and ſubjected to the government of reaſon, by any methods whatever that can be taken for that purpoſe: the firſt indications ſhould therefore be carefully watch'd, and check'd in every inſtance.

I ſmile to think what objections are commonly made, by ſome overfond parents to ſuch a manner of proceeding. — If I am not miſtaken, theſe two are the principal; that to curb children too much is apt to break their ſpirits; and that the world being ſo full of diſappointments, few people eſcape them when they come to maturity, it is pity the poor things ſhould know ſorrow before their time; — to both which I take the liberty to make this reply:

Firſt, As to what they call the breaking of the ſpirit: — That due decorum I would recommend, takes no more of the ſpirit from the young maſter or miſs than what is neceſſary to keep them from running into thoſe follies and exceſſes, which, how excuſeable ſoever in childhood, render them contemptible in riper years; as the ſkilful gardener lops from his tender plant thoſe ſuperfluous branches, which, if ſuffered to continue, would hinder it from growing to perfection.——Then as to the ſecond, —Every one knows the ſorrows their little hearts are capable of feeling make no laſting impreſſion on them: they will cry one moment, and laugh the next: — the contradiction they meet with, will only make them ſenſible that they neither can nor ought to expect they are to have their will in all things; and the trifling diſappointments given them will enable them to ſuſtain with fortitude

thoſe

thoſe of more conſequence which may hereafter poſſibly befal them, A boy is leſs liable to the danger of being ſpoiled by too much indulgence than a girl; becauſe he is no ſooner taken from the nurſery than he is either put out to ſchool, or, if of a ſuperior rank, under the inſpection of a tutor.

I have the honour to be pretty nearly related, by marriage to lady Plyant, her late huſband being my firſt couſin.—Decency obliges me to viſit the widow ſometimes: ſhe is a very affable good-natur'd woman, and has, indeed, a greater ſhare of underſtanding than her too great compliance with the cuſtoms of the age will permit her to make ſhew of. She keeps a prodigious deal of company, for which reaſon I ſee her much leſs frequently than otherwiſe I ſhould do; but happening to paſs by her houſe one day, when no coach or chair was in waiting there, I ventur'd to knock at the door, and was glad to be told ſhe was alone: I had not, however, been with her above ten minutes before two or three loud raps proclaim'd the approach of ſome new gueſt, and preſently after a grave elderly lady was introduced. Lady Plyant received her with much politeneſs and a great ſhew of friendſhip, and after the firſt ſalutations were over, and we had reſeated ourſelves, ſaid to her,

Lady Plyant. Dear Mrs. Loyter, I have not ſeen you this age, and have been quite unhappy in the want of you.

Mrs. Loyter. Dear Lady Plyant, the loſs is wholly mine; but I have been ſo embarraſs'd;—my poor girl has been extremely indiſpoſed.

Lady Plyant. Bleſs me!—Miſs not well, and I hear nothing of it!—But I hope ſhe is better.

Mrs. Loyter. Perfectly recover'd madam: ſhe will have the honour of waiting on your ladyſhip this evening; ſhe is gone to make a few viſits, but pray'd

pray'd heartily to find nobody at home, that ſhe might follow me here the ſooner.

Lady Plyant. How perfectly kind that was! — Well, ſhe is a charming creature; you are the happieſt woman in the world in having ſuch a daughter: — I proteſt among all my acquaintance I do not know any young lady comes up to her; there is ſomething ſo ſweet, ſo engaging in every thing ſhe does.

Mrs. Loyter. She is infinitely obliged to your ladyſhip: indeed I have taken a great deal of pains with her; for as I have no other daughter, I ſhould never have forgiven myſelf if I had not uſed my utmoſt endeavours to form her mind ſo as to make her as agreeable as poſſible to her acquaintance.

Lady Plyant. Oh, madam, the world muſt allow you have; Miſs is the darling of every body that knows her.

Mrs. Loyter. The girl has a great deal of good-nature, madam, and does not want a genius and capacity to mingle in converſation on almoſt any ſubject becoming a young lady to be acquainted with.

I had been upon the wing to take my flight almoſt from the moment Mrs. Loyter came in; but what was ſaid in relation to her daughter determin'd me to ſtay till Miſs arrived, in order to be convinced how far her perſon and behaviour correſponded with the high character had been given of her. At length Miſs Loyter appeared, and I ſtretch'd my eyelids to their full extent to take in all the charms I had heard ſhe was poſſeſs'd of: the girl, indeed, was well enough, but I could diſcover nothing extraordinary about her, nor did her eyes or air give any indications of that capacity her mother ſeem'd to boaſt of; but as I thought it unfair to give a verdict on mere appearances, I ſuſpended my judgment on her underſtanding 'till I had more ſubſtantial proofs.

The diſcourſe at firſt was only on where ſhe had been, who ſhe had ſeen, and how ſuch and ſuch a lady was dreſs'd: I found Miſs talk'd very learnedly on this ſubject, and therefore was not without hope of hearing ſomething from her equally lively on others of more importance; but none being ſtarted, I was compell'd to liſten to the ſeveral animadverſions made by theſe three ladies on caps, flounces, and ſuch like. At laſt Miſs happening to ſay that ſhe had met Mrs. O—— in one of the viſits ſhe had been making, I preſently catch'd up the word, and ſaid to her,—'Then, madam, I doubt not but 'ſome converſation paſs'd, which you will do us 'the favour to repeat, as the lady you mention is 'perfectly acquainted with public affairs, and, in-'deed, reaſons upon them very juſtly.' To which 'ſhe reply'd, 'So they ſay, ſir; but ſhe was juſt 'going out when I came in; and indeed I was 'heartily glad of it; for I hate to hear a deal of 'ſtuff about things I know nothing of.' As I had a good ſhare in the enſuing part of this converſation, I ſhall, to avoid confuſion, repeat my own words as if ſpoken by another perſon.

Author. Then, madam, you have no reliſh for politics?

Miſs. No truly, ſir: — What buſineſs have I with the tranſactions of kings, and princes, and parliaments? It makes me ſick to hear ſo much of wars, and treaties, and conventions, and taxes, and grievances, and ſuch nonſenſe.

Author. I muſt confeſs, madam, the affairs of Europe are a little intricate at preſent, and may be puzzling to a lady's comprehenſion; but I ſuppoſe you are not unacquainted with the hiſtories of former times?

Miſs. Lord, ſir, what have I to do with former times?

Author.

Author. Every one, madam, has to do with the annals of the country where they were born.

Mrs. Loyter. Theſe things are quite out of my daughter's way; but for all that, I can aſſure you, ſir, ſhe reads a great deal.

Author. It would be pity, indeed, madam, ſo fine a young lady ſhould be altogether ignorant of books: I imagine therefore that Miſs's genius ſoars to a higher pitch, the wonders of the creation; I make no queſtion but ſhe has read Le Spectacle de la Nature.

Mrs. Loyter. I believe not, ſir.—Have you my dear?

Miſs. Not I, truly; — but I have heard enough of it: they ſay there are four volumes of it taken up with nothing but a deſcription of trees, birds, beaſts, fiſhes, and naſty inſects.

Author. What do you, think, madam, of Fontenelle's Plurality of Worlds?

Miſs. O hang it, I was never ſo diſappointed in my life: I thought by the beginning, when I found a gentleman and lady were taking their walk together by moon-light, ſome pretty adventure would have enſued; but, good God, the author has made them talk of nothing but planets, and the things that happen in the ſky.

Author. I fancy then, Miſs, romances and novels are chiefly your taſte.

Miſs. I hate romances, they are too tedious; as for novels, I like ſome of them well enough, particularly Mrs. Behn's; but I know not how it is, the authors now-a days have got ſuch a way of breaking off in the middle of their ſtories, that one forgets one half before one comes to the other.

Author. Digreſſions, miſs, when they contain fine ſentiments and judicious remarks, are certainly the moſt valuable part of that ſort of writing.

Miſs. I cannot think ſo, and I could wiſh the authors would keep their ſentiments and remarks to themſelves, or elſe have them printed in a different letter, that one might know when to begin and when to leave off.

Author. I preſume, miſs, you are fond of poetry?

Miſs. Not very fond; I can't ſay I ever read much of it.

I thought I had now ſufficiently ſounded the genius and capacity of this young lady, therefore ceaſed to engroſs her any longer to myſelf, and ſoon after took my leave, ſecretly wondering at the ſtrange partiality of Mrs. Loyter in regard both of herſelf and daughter. A few hours, however, made me begin to judge ſomewhat more favourably of theſe ladies: 'Tho' Mrs. Loyter, ſaid I within 'myſelf, is miſtaken in believing ſhe has been able 'to make her daughter paſs for a wit, her endeavours, notwithſtanding, may have had better ſucceſs in other accompliſhments more eſſential to 'her happineſs: ſhe may have made her a good 'œconomiſt, and perfectly acquainted with every 'thing requiſite for the well managing a family.'

I had the more reaſon to imagine that this young lady was train'd up in frugality and good houſewifery, as I had been told that Mr. Loyter lived to the height of his income, that he ſaved no money, had ſeveral ſons, the eldeſt of whom, after his deceaſe, was to run away with the eſtate; ſo that it could not be expected the daughter would have any fortune to entitle her to a huſband at all ſuitable to the appearance ſhe made. But as I was always willing to be convinced whether my conjectures were right or wrong, I reſolved to make an Inviſible Viſit io this family. Juſt as I came to the houſe, Mr. Loyter was going out, and the door being open'd for him, I ſlipp'd in, and went up ſtairs: the old lady was ſitting in the dining room

window

window with her ſpectacles on, very hard at work. Breakfaſt was but juſt over, as I found by the maid's removing the tea-equipage, and Miſs was gone up to dreſs, it ſeems; for ſhe came down preſently after in the ſame form I had ſeen her at lady Flyant's; ſhe ran directly to the great glaſs, in order to examine how her petticoats hung at the bottom, and then turn'd to her mother, and ſeeing what ſhe was about, ſaid to her,

Miſs. Lord, mamma, have you not done mending my tippet yet!

Mrs. Loyter. Indeed, my dear, it is paſt mending, you have torn the lace in twenty places, I believe, with thoſe ugly pins in your ſtomacher; I wiſh you would take more care of your things.

Miſs. Indeed I can't be a ſlave to my cloaths.

Mrs. Loyter. I would not have you, my dear; but this vexes me, becauſe it is the only handſome tippet you have; you muſt e'en try to coax your father to give you a couple of pieces to buy you another, the firſt time you find him in a good humour; for I aſſure you I have not a ſingle guinea in the world.

Miſs. Well, 'tis a ſhameful thing one has not money without aſking for, when one has a fancy to any thing: but, mamma, can nothing be done with this lace?

Mrs. Loyter. It will never make up again in the ſhape it is; but I believe I may contrive to make a handſome tucker of it.

Miſs. Oh, I ſhall like a tucker of it vaſtly; pray, mamma, do it as ſoon as you can.

Mrs. Loyter. Where are you going, my dear?

Miſs. I am only going to the next ſtreet to lady Lovetoy's, to aſk if Miſs will take a walk with me in the Park.

Mrs. Loyter. Do not ſtay too long; your father brings company home to-day, and we are to have

a great dinner. Mr. Bloſſom, and his ſon juſt come from the univerſity, are to be here, ſo I would not have you out of the way for the world: who can tell what may happen?

Miſs. Oh, why did not I know that ſooner? I would have had on my new gauze cap; but 'tis no matter, I will come home time enough to change it.

With theſe words ſhe ſnatch'd up her little muff, and gallop'd down ſtairs, leaving her poor mother poring over the breaches ſhe had undertaken to rectify.

Methinks I hear how heartily the gay and witty part of my readers will laugh at the character of miſs Loyter: they will certainly look upon her as a ſtalking, ſtaring, ſtupid, noteleſs creature; a moving piece of mere matter, uninform'd by any ſoul or ſpirit, wholly incapable of deſerving praiſe, and equally inſenſible of contempt: 'tis true ſhe appears ſo, — yet it may not be owing ſo much to any deficiency of nature in her, as to the miſtaken fondneſs of a mother, who fearing to give her a moment's diſcontent, neglected to rouſe the native ſluggiſhneſs of her faculties by any exerciſe or employment.

What therefore can be expected from a young perſon bred in a ſupine indolence, accuſtom'd to have her will in every thing, and ſcarce taught the difference between good and evil, but that ſhould, all her life, act as chance, or as her own undiſtinguiſhing fancy ſhall direct? —Bleſs all ſober and thinking men from a wife of this caſt!

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

The Author expects will make a full atonement to the ladies for the too much plain dealing, as ſome of them may think, of the preceding chapter.

WOMEN and wedlock are the common topics of ridicule among men, who, without one ſpark of genius or capacity, imagine themſelves wits, and ſet up for ſuch: but whatever either they, or ſome who even have a better way of thinking in other things, pretend to alledge againſt the ſex, it is very evident, and muſt be confeſs'd, that nature has endowed the minds of many women with as great and valuable talents as ever ſhe beſtow'd on men.

Numberleſs are the examples which might be brought from the records both of ancient and modern hiſtory, to prove the truth of this aſſertion; but I ſhall content myſelf with mentioning only a few, yet enough to make thoſe unworthy maligners of a ſex, to whom they know in their own hearts, they are indebted for all the convenience and happineſs of their lives, take ſhame to themſelves and bluſh for what they have ſaid. Who is ſo ignorant as not to have heard of the fam'd Cornelia of Rome, — the mother of the Gracchi, and the wife of Brutus, — the learned Hypatia of Greece, — the Boadicea and the Cartiſmuda of ancient Britain: but 'tis needleſs to look back into ſuch diſtant times, — the wife of the late Peter the Great of Muſcovy, — the imperial heroine of Germany, — Seigniora Laura of Italy, — and the preſent queens of Sweden and the Two Sicilies, are no leſs public than ſhining proofs of the capacity of a female mind. And even here, there are not wanting

ſome, I may ſay, many ladies, who in private, and almoſt obſcure life, are poſſeſs'd of qualifications that might add luſtre to the higheſt ſtations. In fine, there is nothing more certain, than that if the women, generally ſpeaking, are leſs knowing than the men, it is only becauſe they are denied the ſame advantages of education, and the miſtaken mother laviſhes her whole cares in embelliſhing the pretty perſon of her daughter, and gives no attention to the cultivation of her underſtanding.

I am happy in the acquaintance of a lady whom I ſhall diſtinguiſh by the name of Amadea: ſhe had been married very young to a gentleman whom ſhe tenderly loved, and by whom ſhe was no leſs beloved; but had the misfortune to loſe him at the age of twenty-five, and was at the ſame time the mother of three daughters, the eldeſt ſcarce four years old. The land eſtate, which was very conſiderable, deſcended to the next male heir of the family, and all the perſonals, with a jointure of four hundred per annum, to the fair widow, and each of her children five thouſand pounds.

The firſt three years of her widowhood ſhe lived the life of a recluſe, ſeldom ſtirring out of her own houſe, except to her devotions, or when the neceſſity of her affairs obliged her; nor did ſhe, with her mourning, throw this reſerve entirely off: tho' it is now full thirteen years ſince her dear huſband's death, ſhe neither viſits nor receives viſits as formerly, but confines her converſation to thoſe of her kindred, or very long and intimate acquaintance; never appears at any public diverſion, and rejects even the firſt mention of propoſals for a ſecond marriage, though ſeveral very advantageous ones have been attempted.

All her care has been turned on the education of her children, and all her pleaſures center'd in obſerving

obſerving the improvements they made by the inſtructions given to them:—ſhe had never ſuffered their infancy to be frighted with idle ſtories of ſpirits and hobgoblins, nor amuſed with fairy tales; from their moſt early years ſhe awak'd reaſon in them, and contriv'd it ſo, that even the little ſports ſhe indulged them in ſhould ſome way or other be conducive to that great end.

As they grew bigger, ſhe had maſters to teach them muſic and dancing, the French and Italian languages, and as much of the Latin as was ſufficient to make them ſpeak and write Engliſh properly; but theſe politer ſtudies were not to take up all their time; the œconomy of domeſtic life ſhe look'd upon as too neceſſary a qualification not to be well attended to; ſome hours in every day were ſet apart for needle-work; and whenever the table was to be furniſh'd with any thing extraordinary, they were ſure to be put under the tuition of the cook, and frequently aſſiſted her in thoſe parts of her buſineſs, which were the moſt delicate and leaſt laborious.

Thus deſirous of enriching their minds with every uſeful kind of knowledge, it cannot be ſuppoſed that books were out of the queſtion; no, each of theſe young ladies takes upon her, in her turn, to read to the two others the whole time they are at work. But above all other things, this diſcreet mother was ſtudiouſly watchful to prevent the pride and little vanities, ſo incident to human nature, from taking too faſt hold of their young hearts: betimes ſhe taught them, that nothing concerning themſelves, except the embelliſhments of their minds, was worthy their attention; that all cares relating to dreſs or perſon, beyond what cleanlineſs and decency requir'd, were ſuperfluous and ſilly; and that every minute waſted at the toylet, would rob them of ſome advantage

vantage they might otherwiſe receive. I am well aware, thoſe of my fair readers who have been brought up in a different manner, which, by the way, I fear are much the greateſt part, will be apt to cry out againſt the conduct of Amadea; they will, perhaps, ſay, they wonder the poor girls are not mop'd, and that they muſt certainly be dull ſtupid creatures: but thoſe who think thus, need only have a ſight of the young ladies to be convinced of their miſtake: nothing can be more lively and ſpirituous than all the three ſiſters; ſmiles of innocence and joy dwell for ever on their faces, and denote an innate chearfulneſs and ſatisfaction, which all thoſe hurrying pleaſures, ſo eagerly purſued by others, have not the power of beſtowing.

I made ſeveral Inviſible Viſits to them in their own apartment, and I know very few things capable of giving me a more ſincere delight than I took in obſerving their behaviour, at times when they thought themſelves entirely free from all inſpection, and had no occaſion to put reſtraint upon their words or actions. Never did I find them lolling out of window, or conſulting their look or motions in the great glaſs; never heard them complaining they were not permitted to be firſt in every new faſhion; never wiſhing to be in the Mall, or any other public place; never wantonly giggling about love or lovers; never quarrelling with each other, or ridiculing the foibles of their acquaintance. Sometimes I caught them playing and ſinging to their inſtruments; at others amuſing themſelves with practiſing ſome new dance, and not ſeldom buſily employed in needle-work for the uſe of the family; and at the ſame time making ſuch remarks as occurr'd to them on ſome paſſage or other in hiſtory; in a word, I could perceive nothing but what put me in mind of the three

three Graces, who, according to one of our poets, are actuated but by one ſoul, and that, all harmony and ſweet contentment.

The truth is, Amadea never makes uſe of any auſterity: the precepts ſhe gives them are only enforced by her own example, and delivered in ſuch a manner as to ſteal themſelves upon the mind, and have no need of any compunction from authority; ſo that one may truly ſay,

Wiſdom appears in her ſo bright and gay,
They hear with pleaſure, and with pride obey.

Happy the children who have ſuch a mother! Happy the mother who has children ſuch as theſe! I am perſuaded many examples of this kind might be found, if parents would be at the pains to purſue the ſame meaſures Amadea did, and inſtil into their offspring the principles of virtue and wiſdom, before they knew what was meant by vice and folly.

CHAP. VII.

Contains the recital of an adventure, which, perhaps, will not be found leſs intereſting, for its being not altogether of ſo ſingular a nature as ſome others in this work may have appeared.

I Was one morning taking my Inviſible progreſſion into thoſe pleaſant fields which lie behind Montague-Houſe, not with the leaſt view of making any diſcoveries, for I could expect none in that retired place, but merely to enjoy the benefit of the freſh air, I had not walk'd many minutes, however, before I heard the tread of ſome perſons cloſe behind me; I ſtepp'd aſide to let them paſs, and ſaw that one of them was Narciſſa, the only daughter of a gentleman, who lived in that neigh-

bourhood: the perſon who accompany'd her was her maid, as I ſoon after found by the following dialogue between them.

Narciſſa. Indeed, Betty, I think Capt. Pike ſhews but little love to let us be here before him.

Betty. Oh, madam, you ſhould conſider that gentlemen in his poſt are not always maſters of their time: you know he ſaid he came to town on affairs of the regiment, and ſomething, perhaps, may have happened; but whatever it is that detains him, it cannot be for want of affection; I am ſo certain of that, I would pawn my life upon it.

Narciſſa. You are very confident, Betty, to offer ſuch ſecurity for a man you have never ſeen but twice in your life.

Betty. If I had never ſeen him but once, madam, I have ſeen enough to make me know that he loves you to diſtraction: poor gentleman, if he ſhould not ſucceed in his addreſſes, I am ſure he has reaſon to curſe me.

Narciſſa. Curſe thee, Betty!—why curſe thee?

Betty. He might never have ſeen you if it had not been for me. Don't you remember, madam, how I teaz'd you to go into a ſhop and buy the laſt new play: he was ſitting reading when we came in, and I ſhall never forget how he threw down the pamphlet he had in his hand and ſtared at you, and how he ſigh'd; poor ſoul, he loſt his heart from that very moment;—then how he followed us into the Park; and how he trembled when he aſk'd your leave to join us?

Narciſſa. Piſh, that might be affectation.

Betty. No, madam, no ſuch matter; the tongue, may deceive one, but the eyes cannot. And then, when you were ſo good to give him a meeting afterwards in the walk by Roſamond's pond, how tenderly he expreſs'd himſelf: for my part, my heart melted at every word he ſaid.

Narciſſa

Narciſſa. He can talk moving enough, that's certain; but yet, Betty, I ought not to be too haſty in giving credit to a man I know ſo little of, or what deſigns he may have upon me.

Betty. Nay, madam, I think you know as much of him as you can do without being married to him. Did not he tell you his name was Pike, and that he was a Captain of Colonel *******'s Regiment? As to his deſigns, you cannot doubt of their being honourable, as he begg'd you would permit him to viſit you, and aſk your father's leave to make his addreſſes.

Narciſſa. Ah, Betty, I wiſh ſuch a thing could be, for he is a prodigious pretty man; but it is impoſſible, you know my father hates a ſoldier, calls them a pack of locuſts; beſides he has always deſigned me for Mr. Oakly.

Betty. Ay, madam, and will make you have Mr. Oakly too, or lead apes in Hell, if you don't take care to prevent it.

Narciſſa. Heigh ho!

Betty. Never ſigh, madam, but reſolve.

Narciſſa. On what?

Betty. To run away from a forced marriage; to exert the ſpirit of a true-born Engliſhwoman, and be your own provider.

Narciſſa. How thou talkeſt?

Betty. I talk nothing but reaſon, madam; but here comes one who I fancy will be able to urge it more effectually.

The perſon whom ſhe had been ſo ſtrenuouſly pleading for now appeared, he was a tall well-made man, and had a good ſoldierly aſpect; but yet I thought I diſcovered ſomething about him that ſhewed he had not always been accuſtomed to wear the rich cloaths he now had on; there wanted that eaſy freedom in his air, which denotes the true-bred gentleman, and I preſently ſet him down

in

in my mind, either for an impoſter, or one whom ſome lucky chance had elevated far above his birth. He approach'd Narciſſa with a low bow, and after taking hold of one of her hands and kiſſing it with the greateſt fervency, addreſs'd her in theſe terms:

Capt. How miſerable have I been, my angel, in being kept thus long from your divine preſence?

Narciſſa. I do not doubt, ſir, but you have been better engaged.

Capt. Cruel ſuppoſition! How can you ſo far wrong me, as to imagine that the whole world has any thing in it I ſhould put in competition with the bleſſing I now enjoy? But the major of our regiment is in town, and unluckily ſent for me this morning; we ſubalterns muſt obey our commanding officer; but I hope in a few months to be a colonel, and I ſhall then have leiſure to lie eternally at your feet.

Betty. Ah, ſir, I am afraid before that time my lady will be obliged to have ſomebody elſe lie at her feet.

Narciſſa. Hold your prating, huſſy. Who gave you the privilege of ſpeaking?

Betty. Madam, the reſpect I have for you wil not ſuffer me to be ſilent. I tell you nothing but the truth, ſir; my lady will be forced to marry a man to whom ſhe has the greateſt averſion.

Capt. Oh Heaven! ſo neat being torn from all my hopes! — And can you, madam, can a lady of your delicacy ſubmit ——

Narciſſa. Sir, this fooliſh wench talks ſhe knows not what: — I may live ſingle if I pleaſe.

Capt. Live ſingle! Heaven forbid. No, nature endowed you not with ſuch ſuperior charms but to bleſs ſome man, who, by his abundant love, might make him worthy of them. Oh that I were the happy he!

Narciſſa.

Narciſſa, Think not of it, Captain, my father would never give his conſent to any one but the perſon he has made choice of for me, much leſs would he endure to ſee me wedded to a gentleman of the army.

Capt. And have you too that implacable averſion to a ſaſh and croſlet?

Narciſſa. I will not pretend to ſay I have; I think the army our only ſecurity in time of war, and the greateſt ornament to our country in times of peace.

Capt. Oh then, if I could flatter myſelf there was nothing in my perſon more diſagreeable to you than in my function, I ſhould have nothing left to fear.

Narciſſa. Yes, indeed, you would, ſir, a great deal; for I aſſure you, if I married you, my father would not give me a groat.

Capt. Let him keep his dirty traſh, I deſpiſe money, the commiſſion I enjoy at preſent will keep us above contempt, and I have money in the bank ready to purchaſe the firſt vacant command of a regiment.

Narciſſa. Can you imagine I would give myſelf to a man who has but juſt begun to tell me that he loved me?

Capt. My whole life ſhall be but one continued ſcene of courtſhip; be aſſured I ſhall not be the leſs, but infinitely the more your adorer by being your huſband; oh then be juſt to my ardent paſſion, generouſly put an end to my deſpair.

Narciſſa. Bleſs me, what would the world ſay of ſuch a thing!

Capt. The wiſe, madam, deſpiſe all forms. Do not kings and princes marry thoſe they never ſaw before; beſides, the late proceedings of the legiſlature lays you under a neceſſity of coming to a ſpeedy reſolution.

Betty

Betty. Ay, madam, remember the act.

Capt. Ay, madam, conſider how ſoon that fatal Monday will arrive, which takes from you the power of ſnatching from miſery the man who loves you more than life, and would ſacrifice every thing for you.

Narciſſa. I muſt confeſs, Captain, your offering to take me without a fortune demands ſome gratitude on my part; and if — but no more, — I ſee a lady yonder whom I would not wiſh ſhould ſurpriſe us in this converſation; this evening you ſhall know my final reſolution. Where can I ſend to you?

Capt. I have an appointment with ſome young officers this afternoon at Will's Coffee-houſe, Whitehall, and ſhall there wa't my doom with the moſt ardent impatience; but before you paſs the ſentence of my fate, think, oh think, my life or death depends upon it.

Narciſſa. Well, well, be eaſy, but go.

Capt. I muſt obey; may love and all its powers plead for me.

He ſaid no more, but turned away as his miſtreſs had commanded, and paſs'd on to another part of the field, while ſhe advanced to meet the lady ſhe had mentioned; but Betty, who was heartily vex'd at this accident, could not forbear crying out as they went along, 'I wonder what could bring 'Marilla here?

The words were either not heard, or not regarded by Narciſſa, who, I could perceive by her looks, was little leſs diſconcerted; ſhe met her friend, however, with a ſhew a gaiety and ſatisfaction, and as ſoon as they came near each other, ſaluted her in theſe terms:

Narciſſa. My dear Marilla! 'tis a wonder to ſee you in ſuch a place as this; you uſed to be an enemy to all ſolitary walks.

Marilla:

Marilla. So I am ſtill; but I have been at your houſe, and was told you were here, ſo came in mere good-nature to hinder you from indulging melancholy; but I find I might have ſpared myſelf that trouble. Pray who was that pretty fellow that left you juſt now?

Narciſſa. I know not, he only came up to us, ſeeing nobody elſe in the place, I ſuppoſe to aſk which was the neareſt way to Great Ruſſel-ſtreet.

Marilla. Rather to aſk the way to a lady's heart, who lives not far from Great Ruſſel-ſtreet. Oh, Narciſſa, you cannot deceive me: I could eaſily perceive, at the diſtance I was, that he did not part from you with the air of a man who had no other buſineſs than to aſk ſuch an impertinent queſtion: beſides, I muſt tell you that you are a very ill diſſembler, your bluſhes declare that he is a lover; I know well enough that you met him here by appointment. — Prithee let me into the whole of the ſecret.

Narciſſa ſtill perſiſted in her firſt aſſertions, but the other ſeemed not to give credit on that ſcore, and aſſuming a more ſerious air, ſpoke thus:

Marilla. I perceive, my dear Narciſſa, I am not thought worthy of your confidence, tho' I am very certain you have not a friend in the world who wiſhes your happineſs with more ſincerity than I do.

Narciſſa. I believe it, my dear, and am much obliged to you; but you would not have me tell lyes to ſhew my gratitude.

Marilla. Well, well, I ſhall urge you no farther, and ſhould not have been ſo impertinent to take any notice of what I ſaw, but for the tranſport it gave me to imagine you might now have an opportunity of delivering yourſelf from the danger of being forced into a marriage with a man whom I have heard you declare ſo great an averſion for.

Narciſſa.

Narciſſa. And ſuppoſe the thing were really as you have taken it into your head to fancy, would you have me diſoblige my father by marrying without his conſent?

Marilla. Yes, when he will give his conſent to nobody but one with whom you muſt be miſerable: —for beſides the diſlike you have have to the perſon of Oakly, his temper is ſuch as would break a woman's heart in two months. You know I am am very intimate with his ſiſter, and cannot avoid ſeeing oddities in his behaviour as have made me tremble for you a thouſand times.

Narciſſa. I cannot think my father will ever go about to compel my inclinations.

Marilla. Oakly is of another opinion; for I can tell you he makes no ſcruple to ſay, that if you do not marry him you will marry nobody; therefore without diving into the ſecrets of your heart, let me adviſe you, my dear creature, not to loſe the ſhort time allowed you, but if you have any offer leſs diſagreeable to you than Oakly, accept it at once; three days hence it will be out of your power.

Narciſſa. But, my dear, what man that is worth having will marry a woman without a fortune?

Marilla. If I were a man I ſhould tell you that your perſon was a ſufficient fortune, and I do not doubt but that there are a great many who would think ſo; but you have two thouſand pounds left you by your grandmother, independent of your father, and I dare ſay if you were once married, and the thing paſt recal, he would forgive it; conſider you are his only daughter, and both your brothers are provided for, the one by an eſtate, and the other by a good preferment in the church.

What anſwer Narciſſa would have made I know not, it began to rain very faſt, ſo that the ladies were obliged to mend their pace, and make all the haſte

haſte they could out of the field; Marilla took the firſt chair ſhe met with, ſaying it would be dinner-time before ſhe ſhould be able to get dreſs'd; Narciſſa and her maid ran home through the ſhower, and I followed, not only to take ſhelter, but alſo to hear the reſult of the young lady's determination on what had paſs'd between her and Capt. Pike. As ſoon as they had pluck'd off their wet hats and capuchins, and Narciſſa had a little reſettled herſelf, ſhe ſaid to her maid,

Narciſſa. Well, Betty, this has been an odd morning.

Beety. I hope it will prove a lucky one, madam, but I am glad you did not tell Marilla any thing of the matter.

Narciſſa. She was ſo preſſing that I had half a mind; but when I conſidered how great ſhe was with Oakly's ſiſter, I though it was better to keep her in ignorance.

Betty. Much better, indeed, madam. But pray what do you reſolve to do about the Captain?

Narciſſa. Why I muſt e'en have him, I think.

Betty. You made him a kind of promiſe to ſend to him.

Narciſſa. I did ſo, and will keep it; I will write to him this moment, before any company comes to prevent me.

Betty. You are in the right, madam, there is nothing like the time preſent.

To Capt. PIKE.

SIR,

'I Should be guilty of an injuſtice both to myſelf 'and you, not to be ſenſible of the proof you offer 'of your ſincerity; I find in it, indeed, all that 'can be imagined, and much more than could be 'expected of love, honour, and generoſity; and

'hope

'hope I ſhall hereafter ſtand excuſed to my father 'and the world, for taking a ſtep excited by gra-'titude, and approv'd of by my reaſon; meet me 'therefore to morrow morning at eight preciſely, 'in the Piazza next King-ſtreet, Covent-Garden, 'where I will put myſelf under your protection, 'and be conducted by you to whatever place you 'ſhall judge moſt proper for the ceremony which 'ſhall make me eternally yours.

'NARCISSA.'

Having ſeal'd this billet, ſhe gave it to her maid, with a ſtrict charge to ſend it by a truſty meſſenger; on which the girl reply'd, 'Yes, madam, 'you may depend on the ſafe conveyance; for I 'will be the bearer of it myſelf.'

What farther chat paſs'd between the miſtreſs and maid was too inſignificant to be repeated, nor, indeed, did I ſtay to hear much of it, having already gained all that was neceſſary for the preſent, ſo ſhut my Tablets and retired on the firſt opportunity I found for my leaving the houſe.

As it was plain to me, however, that Betty was deeply intereſted in the conceſſion Narciſſa had made to the Captain, and I had alſo ſome ſuſpicion that he was not in reality the perſon he pretended to be, I reſolved to go in the evening to the coffee-houſe, and be witneſs of his behaviour, on receiving the letter Betty was to bring. Accordingly I went and found him there, not, as he ſaid, in company with young officers, but ſitting alone in a corner of the room with his hat very much flapp'd. — A few minutes after I came in, a waiter called aloud to know if one Capt. Pike was there, on which he ſtarted up, and anſwering to the name, was told a gentlewoman at the door deſired to ſpeak with him; he went haſtily out, and I purſued his ſteps, not doubting but it was

was the emiſſary of Narciſſa; as ſoon as he ſaw it was ſhe, he cry'd out in ſome ſurpriſe:

Capt. What, ſiſter, are you come yourſelf! You bring me no bad news, I hope.

Betty. No, no, the beſt you can expect; but walk this way, 'tis not proper to ſtand here to talk. —For Heaven's ſake! why did you venture to appoint ſuch a public place as this?

Capt. No body knows me here, my Captain never uſes this houſe. But tell me, how goes our affair?

Betty. Rarely; ſhe will have you, here is her promiſe under her own hand. —— By this time they were got about the middle of Scotland-yard, where Betty having given him the letter of Narciſſa, he ſtopp'd to read it by the light of a lamp at a gentleman's door, and as ſoon as he had finiſhed cry'd out.

Capt. This is brave, indeed, and nothing ſure was ever ſo lucky as our fixing to-morrow for our wedding. for the Captain went to Hampſtead this morning with a whore he pick'd up in the Park the other night, and will not be in town theſe two days, ſo I ſhall have all that time to myſelf, and can get at what cloaths and linnen I want. But, my dear ſiſter, what ſhall I do with this girl, when I have married her? where muſt I carry her?

Betty. That is what I came to talk about. You muſt take a fine lodging for her, and order a handſome dinner to be provided at ſome tavern or other; every thing muſt be done with a grand air, that ſhe may ſuſpect nothing till after you have conſummated. Hah, brother.

Capt. But, Betty, I have no money; all will go wrong ſtill if you cannot help me out.

Betty Nothing would go right if it were not for me; you may thank God for having ſuch a ſiſter, you might have been a foot-ſoldier elſe as long

long as you lived; but there is no time to be loſt, I have brought you four pieces, and I believe that will be ſufficient for every thing; go and buy a ring, and ſecure a lodging immediately.

Capt. You may be ſure I ſhall not fail. But harky'e, Betty, take care ſhe brings the writings of her two thouſand pounds, and all her jewels.

Betty. Ay, ay, —ſhe ſhall leave nothing of value behind her, I'll engage.

With theſe words they ſeparated, and I went home, heartily glad that I had made this diſcovery and determined to ſave Narciſſa, if poſſible, from the misfortune ſhe was ſo near falling into, to which end I ſat down to my eſcrutore, and immediately wrote to her father in the following terms:

To JOHN *******, Eſq;

SIR,

'The ſhock I am now about to give you can 'only be excuſed by its being done to prevent you 'from receiving a much greater and more laſting 'one. Sorry am I to tell you, yet ſo it is, your 'daughter Narciſſa is on the point of utter de-'ſtruction: ſhe has promiſed, and is reſolved to 'keep her word, to join herſelf in marriage with a 'wretch, who, tho' of the moſt abject rank, in 'order to ſeduce her innocence, aſſumes the cha-'racter of a gentleman, and calls himſelf Captain 'Pike; Betty, her waiting-maid, is ſiſter to the 'impoſtor, and has been the conductreſs of the 'whole villainous deſign; every thing is prepared 'for the accompliſhment, and to-morrow is the 'day fixed; but I hope this intelligence will reach 'you time enough to prevent ſo irremedible an evil 'I am, Sir, your unknown well-wiſher and 'humble ſervant.'

Having

Having ſent this away, and fully diſcharged what my honour and conſcience repreſented as a duty, I flatter'd myſelf with the expectation of ſeeing the next day treachery and deceit receive the mortification they juſtly merited.

CHAP. VIII.

Contains a brief account of the effects produced by the good intentions of the Inviſible Spy, with ſome other ſubſequent particulars.

THO' I had not the leaſt room to doubt but that the information I had given the father of Narciſſa would have all the ſucceſs I wiſh'd, yet I could not avoid being extremely curious to ſee in what manner the perſons concern'd would behave on this occaſion; accordingly I went to the houſe the next morning about eleven, expecting to find that the maid had been turn'd out of doors, the miſtreſs in tears for her diſappointment, and the old gentleman rejoicing in the thoughts of having ſaved his beloved daughter from undoing herſelf. A ſervant happening to be at the door receiving ſome ſhoes from a fellow, who had been juſt cleaning them, I gain'd an eaſy acceſs. Finding no body in the lower floor I went up ſtairs, but the ſame ſolitude reign'd likewiſe there: I then proceeded a ſtory higher, and there ſaw only a ſervant-maid ſweeping out a room, which, by a toylet being ſet out, I judged was the chamber of Narciſſa: I was very much ſurpriſed to find every thing ſo quiet in a place where I look'd for every thing but confuſion, and ſtopp'd on the ſtairs to conſider what might be the occaſion; when on a ſudden I heard the ringing of a ſmall bell, and preſently after ſaw a footman running haſtily up; I follow'd him where he went,

which

which was into the chamber of Narciſſa's father, who was not yet up, but now call'd for his cloaths. As he was putting them on, he caſt his eyes on the table, and ſeeing a letter lie there, aſk'd his man when, and from whom it came: to which he reply'd, 'Sir, it was left for you laſt night by a porter; but as you came home ſo late would not 'diſturb you with it.'

I was aſtoniſh'd on finding that this was no other than the letter I had ſent to him; but more troubled, that by the delivery of it being delay'd, poor Narciſſa had fallen into the trap laid for her: but if I, a ſtranger, could be ſo much affected, what agony muſt rend the tender father's heart? Scarce had he gone through the half of what I had wrote, before he cry'd out, caſting at the ſame time a look full of deſpair and rage upon his ſervant.

Father. Ill fated wretch! what miſchief, what ruin, has thy neglect brought upon me and my family! You imagin'd I was drunk laſt night, I ſuppoſe; but had I been ſo, here is enough in this letter to have brought me to my ſenſes: but go, run up to my daughter's chamber, ſee if ſhe be there.

Footman. Sir, ſhe went very early this morning with Mrs. Betty, and is not yet come back.

Father. Nor ever will, I fear: the intelligence this brings is too true, I find. Run to Mr. Oakly and my couſin Johnſon's, bid them both come this inſtant! fly! and, do you hear, bring a coach with you; if I can recover her before conſummation, her ruin may be yet prevented.

The fellow went on his errand, and the old gentleman in the mean time ſtamping, biting his lips, and ſhewing all the marks of an inward diſtraction, made an end of putting on his cloaths, in order to go in ſearch of his loſt daughter, when the gentlemen he had ſent for ſhould arrive; but I

ſtaid

ſtaid not to hear what method would be purſued for that purpoſe, as thinking it of no moment, and that it would be better to return again in the evening, when I might probably hear what ſucceſs had attended their endeavours. The time I choſe for going, was as late at night as I thought I might get an opportunity of entering, yet the diſconſolate father was but juſt come home, his two friends were with him, they ſaid all they could to alleviate his ſorrows, but it availed no more than preaching to the winds. They had found out it ſeems, where the marriage was performed; after which they went to all taverns, coffee-houſes, and other public places, which they heard were frequented by officers, to enquire concerning one who called himſelf Capt. Pike, but could not receive the leaſt information of any one who bore that name; and all the conſolation the old gentleman had for the pains he had taken, was the cruel certainty that his dear daughter was inevitably undone.

Though I ſaw very little probability of my being able to learn any thing more at this houſe than I had already done, yet I could not forbear calling conſtantly there every day, and at laſt, by this dint of continued application, I became acquainted with the whole melancholy ſecret of Narciſſa's fate, almoſt as ſoon as the family knew it themſelves. The pretended Captain had managed every thing according to the direction of his ſiſter. As ſoon as the ceremony was over, he had conducted his bride to very handſome lodgings, where an entertainment ſuitable to the occaſion was provided; and the poor deluded young lady, ſeeing nothing but what ſerved to make her ſatisfied with what ſhe had done, in return for his imaginary generoſity, made him a preſent of her two thouſand pounds, which was in India Bonds.

Her contentment might, perhaps, have laſted ſome little time longer than it did, if ſhe had not propos'd waiting on her father, to implore his forgiveneſs and bleſſing; on which the impoſtor, having now got his ends, thinking it needleſs to continue the deception any longer, confeſs'd that he was no more than a private man in the army; but told her that he was now treating with his Captain for his diſcharge, and would purchaſe a commiſſion with ſome part of the money ſhe had given him; and added, that 'till theſe two points were accompliſh'd, it would be altogether improper to appear before her father.

Narciſſa fell into the utmoſt diſtraction on this eclairciſement, vow'd not to live with a wretch who had put ſo baſe a trick upon her, but would go home to her father, who ſhe doubted not but would find means to puniſh ſuch a flagrant piece of villainy. He only laugh'd at her reproaches, and ſaid, that as ſhe was his wife, ſhe had it not in her choice to leave him. Betty alſo now threw off the character of a ſervant, and aſſuming the authority of a ſiſter, pretended to rebuke her idle prating, as ſhe inſolently termed it.

She found an opportunity, however, of making her eſcape, and fled for refuge to the houſe of a near relation, who, on hearing her ſtory, undertook to intercede with her father, which he did ſo ſucceſsfully, that the old gentleman forgave and took her again into favour. All poſſible meaſures were taken to ſet aſide the marriage, and compel the impoſtor to refund the money Narciſſa had ſo unwarily beſtow'd upon him, but as he knew the law was too much on his ſide, having not married her in a falſe name, though under a falſe character, he carried things with a very high hand, would part with nothing, not even the jewels ſhe had left behind, but even threaten'd to commence a proceſs

proceſs againſt any one who detained her perſon. In fine, all that could be done was to get him to ſign articles of ſeparation; after which Narciſſa retired ino the country, where I hear ſhe reſolves to waſte the whole remainder of her days in a melancholy contrition for the raſhneſs of her ungoverned conduct.

I muſt not forget to let my readers know that Marilla is ſince married to Mr. Oakly, with whom, as I am credibly inform'd, ſhe was long paſſionately in love, and on that motive uſed the utmoſt of her endeavours to ſtrengthen the averſion her fair friend had for him.

End of the SIXTH BOOK.

THE Inviſible Spy.

BOOK VII.

CHAP. I.

The Author flatters himſelf will be no unacceptable preſent to all thoſe of the fair ſex, who are either truly innocent, or would preſerve the reputation of being ſo.

HEN a young woman, of what rank or degree ſoever, indulges herſelf in a too great freedom of converſation with one of a looſe and wanton behaviour, ſhe cannot wonder that thoſe who are witneſſes of their intimacy ſhould ſuſpect her guilty of the ſame inclinations; and that tho' perfectly innocent of the faults of her companion, is made an equal partaker of her ſhame. Women, who are either born to, or reduced by accidents to low and indigent circumſtances, excuſe themſelves by ſaying, that the neceſſity of their affairs compels them to keep an acquaintance with perſons whom they find it their intereſt to oblige. But if this be an inſufficient pretence, as certainly it is, ſince there is no intereſt which ought

to

to be put in competition with reputation, what can be alledged in behalf of ladies of fortune and quality, who have it in their power to chuſe their company, and it cannot be ſuppoſed would converſe with any whoſe manners they did not approve?

In fine, there is no one error in conduct, which, according to my opinion, the ſex in general ſhould be more upon their guard againſt than this; for tho' ſome, dazzled with the pomp of ſhow and equipage, may be weak enough to imagine, that to appear in public, or to be known to have an intimacy with a woman of a polluted fame, provided ſhe be a perſon of condition, will bring no blemiſh on their own characters, or be of any prejudice to their morals, yet that ſuch an intimacy is extremely dangerous to both, may be very eaſily demonſtrated.

As to character;—If the world ſhould be more ſilent than it ever was, or ever will be on ſuch occaſions, it cannot be expected that a woman, who has thrown off all regard for her own honour, ſhould have any for that of the perſon ſhe converſes with, or would even wiſh they ſhould be thought poſſeſs'd of a virtue ſhe is entirely deſtitute of herſelf:—no, on the contrary, ſhe will rather have recourſe to all the wicked artifices ſhe may be miſtreſs of to caſt a ſhade over that brightneſs which would render her own deformity more conſpicuous. But this is not the worſt danger to which an innocent perſon is expoſed by keeping company with a bad woman; we are told, from an unqueſtionable authority, that it is hard to touch pitch without being defiled; and certainly there is nothing more evident, than that vice naturally loſes great part of its horrors by becoming familiar to the ſight. The chaſte heart, which ſhudders at the bare repetition of indecent actions, by accuſtoming itſelf to be witneſs of them, ceaſes firſt to wonder, and by degrees to deteſt them; and tho' I will not be ſo uncharitable as to ſay, that the mind

is always corrupted by ſuch a communication, yet I will venture to affirm, that the manners will be ſo.

I know very well, that the timid modeſty I would recommend, as the ſureſt guardian of a virgin's honour, has for many years been exploded; and that ſince ſome foreign cuſtoms have unhappily been introduced among us, to be capable of bluſhing is look'd upon, by thoſe who paſs for models of politeneſs, as an indication of the want both of wit and good breeding. This audacity of behaviour being ſo much the mode, it is not a little difficult to diſtinguiſh between thoſe who really purſue the dictates of a licentious inclination, and thoſe who put on a ſhew of it, merely to comply with the example of others; and a perſon who judges of a woman by what he ſees of her in public, runs a very great riſque of being miſtaken. Often has my opinion been led aſtray in this point, even in regard of ladies with whom I was moſt intimately acquainted, and ſaw every day; nor did I ever dare to give a character of any one of them 'till my Belt of Inviſibily afforded me an opportunity of prying into the ſecrets of the alcove.

Coriſca and Emilia are two celebrated beauties; they are almoſt equally follow'd and admir'd by the men, but neither of them were ever jealous or envious of the praiſes given to the other; and there was once ſo exceſſive a fondneſs between them that they were ſcarce ever ſeen aſunder. Coriſca had been married ſome years, Emilia has not yet been prevailed upon to part with her liberty: but tho' there is this difference in their circumſtances, there has been too much appearance, upon exact ſimilitude, in their humours and conſtitutions; I ſay in appearance, for I have ſince diſcover'd that light and darkneſs are not, in fact, more widely diſtant.

Coriſca, long before ſhe became a wife, was look'd upon as what they called a female rake; ſome there were, however, who imputed what ſhe did only to the

the too great vivacity of her humour, and would not believe her guilty of any real crime; but far the greater number were of a quite different opinion; and indeed the little regard ſhe takes of her family ſince her marriage, the public contempt with which ſhe treats her huſband, and the frequent quarrels ſhe has with him in private, but too much juſtify the worſt character that can be given either of her œconomy or her chaſtity. Yet notwithſtanding all this, there is a certain ſomething in her air, her wit, and manner of behaviour ſo engaging to both ſexes, that ſhe has always been, and ſtill continues to be, conſtantly viſited by perſons not only of the beſt fortunes, but of the beſt reputations, who chuſe rather to ſeem blind to her faults, than deny themſelves the pleaſure of her converſation. It is, beyond all diſpute, a very great pity that a woman ſo plenteouſly endowed by nature with every qualification to ſhew virtue in its moſt amiable colours, ſhould, thro' a ſtrange depravity of principles and inclination, make uſe of all the fine talents ſhe is miſtreſs of only to varniſh over the foul face of vice, and give a pleaſing aſpect to the deformity of ſin and ſhame.

The beautiful perſon of Emilia, her ſprightly wit, her good humour and affability, render'd her the darling of all who knew her: they beheld with an infinity of concern her intimacy with Coriſca, and thoſe, who either by proximity of blood, or a long acquaintance with her, thought themſelves priviledged to offer their advice, did it in the ſtrongeſt terms, and ſpared no remonſtrances that might prevail on her to break off ſo dangerous a communication, but ſhe was deaf to all that could be ſaid to her on this ſubject: it was her misfortune to become the miſtreſs of her own actions at too early an age, what fortune ſhe was poſſeſs'd of was in her own hands; and as ſhe was entirely independent on her friends, would not ſubmit to be directed by them.

In juſtice to this young lady's character, however, I muſt ſay, and ſhall hereafter prove, that there is a fund of humour and virtue in her ſoul ſufficient to have made her look with contempt and deteſtation on the conduct of Coriſca, and to have oblig'd her, if not to break off all converſation with her, at leaſt not to appear with her in public, or to make one in any party of pleaſure where ſhe was engaged. But, alas! the ſeeds of thoſe noble principles for a time lay dormant in her; choak'd up with the natural levities of youth, and the modiſh exceſſes of the age, they had not power to ſhoot forth into action: innocently wanton, and indolently gay, ſhe ſaw not the danger to which ſhe expoſed her perſon and reputation, becauſe ſhe thought not of it, nor gave herſelf the pains to examine what ſnares might poſſibly be ſpread for her, but ſuffering herſelf to be continually hurried from one amuſement to another, never conſider'd or reflected on any thing farther than the preſent ſatisfaction.

I have been thus particular in deſcribing the character and humour of Emilia, becauſe in the courſe of my rambles I have found too many others of the ſame giddy bent, who, without the leaſt propenſity to ill, have heedleſly run into actions which have involved their whole future lives in diſhonour; theſe have reaſon to pardon this digreſſion, eſpecially as it has not been tedious, and I ſhall now return to the adventure which occaſioned it.

Among the many Inviſible Viſits, which for a conſiderable time together I had made to the apartment of this celebrated Coriſca, I happen'd to be there one morning when Favonius and Palamede were with her; the firſt of theſe gentlemen is of a very amorous inclination, and known to be what the world calls well with her! the other, though gay and lively as Mercury himſelf, has been reſtrain'd either through want of inclination to her perſon, or

his

his friendſhip to Favonius, from attempting to take any private liberties, and ſeldom viſits her but in his company. The diſcourſe they were engaged in, when I firſt broke in upon them, I found was on a ſubject of too trifling a nature for me to ſpread my Tablets for the reception of, ſo I ſhall make no repetition of any things which were ſaid 'till the entrance of Emilia, who came in ſoon after. The firſt ſalutations were no ſooner over, than Coriſca taking her fondly by the hand ſpoke thus:

Coriſca. Dear creature, this is an exceſs of goodneſs in you to come thus early, I did not expect you 'till dinner-time.

Emilia. Indeed, my dear, I never waited on you with ſo ill a will, nor came on an errand ſo diſagreeable to my inclination; for I have but juſt time to tell you, that I am deprived of the pleaſure I propoſed of paſſing the whole day with you.

Coriſca. On what occaſion?

Emilia. The moſt unlucky one that could have happen'd; an old aunt of mine has taken it into her head to quit her rookery and henhouſe in the country, and come to ſtare and be ſtared at in town; ſhe arrived laſt night, and ſent me word ſhe muſt needs ſee me this morning; decency obliges me to go, ſhe is my godmother, and beſides ſhe is rich.

Coriſca. But cannot you make ſome excuſe to leave her as ſoon as you have paid your compliments? I ſhall have all the world here this afternoon, and would not have you abſent upon any ſcore.

Emilia. It cannot be avoided, ſhe pretends to have a huge fondneſs for me, and I know will detain me, with a thouſand impertinent declarations of it, 'till bed-time, ſo, my dear, adieu for this whole tedious day; to-morrow, I hope, will atone for this vexation. Gentlemen, your ſervant.

In ſpeaking theſe laſt words ſhe turn'd upon her heel and ran out of the room; but not ſo haſtily, but

that Palamede, with one ſtride, join'd her at the door and led her down ſtairs; and in the mean time Coriſca, looking on Favonius ſaid to him:

Coriſca. I pity poor Emilia; the impertinent fondneſs of an old relation is almoſt as great a mortification as the ſawcy indifference of a young fellow one likes.

Favonius. The beautiful Coriſca, I am ſure, can never be in danger of experiencing the latter of theſe vexations.

To prove the ſincerity of this aſſertion he cloſed it with a ſtrenuous embrace, which Coriſca return'd, there was time for no more, Palamede came back, and Favonius, with a ſmile, ſpoke in this manner:

Favonius. By the ſparkle in your eyes, Palamede, I ſhould imagine the piece of gallantry you have ſhewed to Emilia has been more than ordinarily well received.

Palamede. This and all others I have yet had in my power to treat that lady with, have been too trifling to deſerve much notice from her.

Favonius. Oh, every kind glance gives tranſport to a man in love; you muſt know, madam, I have found out that Palamede is deſperately in love with Emilia.

Coriſca. Indeed! and do you allow the charge, Palamede?

Palamede. Not altogether, madam; I am not abſolutely in love, but confeſs I think Emilia an extreme fine girl, and have had ſome very odd dreams on her account.

Coriſca. What hinders you then from making your addreſſes to her?

Palamede. Why faith, madam, to confeſs the truth, I was afraid of not ſucceeding on the terms I wiſh'd to do; and as for marriage, the circumſtances of my eſtate require I ſhould make choice of a wife with a much larger fortune than Emilia is poſſeſs'd of.

Favonius.

Favonius. You are perfectly in the right, Palamede; a good fortune with a wife is abſolutely neceſſary for a man of pleaſure, as it enables him to make handſome preſents and entertainments to thoſe women he may happen to like better.

Coriſca. So, Palamede, you durſt not aſk Emilia the queſtion, for fear of meeting a rebuff from her over-ſcrupulous virtue.

Palamede. That is indeed the caſe, madam.

Coriſca. Then you are a fool: not but I believe Emilia is perfectly innocent as yet; but what is innocence, what is virtue, what is honour, when oppos'd to love and inclination! Do you not know what Mrs. Behn, who muſt be allow'd to be a perfect judge of nature in our ſex, ſays upon this occaſion?

Oh curſed honour, thou who firſt did'ſt damn
A woman to the ſin of ſhame!
Honour! who taught lovely eyes the art,
To wound, and not to cure the heart;
With loves t'invites, but to forbid with awe,
And to themſelves preſcribe a cruel law.
His chief attributes are pride and ſpight,
His pow'r is robbing lovers of delight.
Honour! that puts our words, that ſhould be free,
Into a ſet formality!
Thou baſe debaucher of the gen'rous heart,
That teacheſt all our looks and actions art,
What love deſigned a ſacred gift,
What nature made to be poſſeſs'd,
Miſtaken honour made a theft.
Thou foe to pleaſure, nature's worſt diſeaſe!
Thou tyrant over mighty kings,
Be gone to princes palaces,
But let the humble ſwain go on,
In the bleſt paths of the firſt race of man,
That neareſt were to Gods allied,
And form'd for love, diſdain'd all other pride.

The emphatic accents and graceful manner with which Coriſca pronounced theſe lines, adding to the beauty of the poetry, ſtruck ſo much upon the hearts of the two gentlemen, that they could not forbear clapping their hands, and crying out ſeveral times, 'Encore, Encore, charming Coriſca!' On which ſhe laugh'd heartily, and reply'd,

Coriſca. I want none of theſe theatrical teſtimonies of approbation; I would only convince Palamede, from the unqueſtionable authority of our Engliſh Sappho, that when a woman loves, no conſiderations are of force to reſtrain her from acting up to the dictates of her paſſion.

Palamede. Ay, madam, if I could flatter myſelf with the hopes of being lov'd by Emilia, I ſhould have nothing to apprehend.

Coriſca. I will not pretend to tell you that ſhe is ſo much in love as not to be able to eat, drink, or ſleep for the thoughts of you; but I have heard her ſay a thouſand times over, I believe, that you are, without exception, the prettieſt fellow in the whole town, that you dreſs the beſt, and have ſomething peculiarly agreeable in your air and manner of behaviour; and on the ſtrength of this, and ſome other indications I have obſerved about her, I dare venture to affirm, that you are far from being indifferent to her, and that ſhe would be no leſs pleaſed than yourſelf with an opportunity of being entertain'd by you in private.

Palamede. Dear madam, you make me the moſt tranſported man alive. But by what means can ſuch a thing be brought about? ſome ſcheme muſt be laid for that purpoſe.

Coriſca. Nothing more eaſy; I have it all in my head already; ſhe will go any where with me; we ſhall be together to-morrow; you too ſhall come in as if by accident, and propoſe going to take the air on the other ſide of the water; there is a houſe the moſt

moſt commodiouſly ſituated that can be;—good gardens, good wine, good every thing:—Favonius is well acquainted with the place.

Favonius. I ſuppoſe you mean that kept by Mrs. *******.

Coriſca. The ſame. When we have been there ſome time, and it begins to draw near the hour proper to think of going home, you ſhall diſcharge the coach, and pretend the fellow got drunk and went away without your knowledge, there will be no poſſibility of procuring a vehicle to bring us to town, eſpecially at night; Favonius muſt be content to do penance with me in loitering about the gardens, or in ſomething or other, 'till morning, while you make the moſt of your time with Emilia.

Palamede. Excellent, my charming Machiavel! But how ſhall we prevail on Emilia to be ſeparated from her dear Coriſca?

Coriſca. Leave that to my management; ſhe ſhall ſuſpect nothing of the matter 'till ſhe finds herſelf alone with you, and then it will be your buſineſs to make her ſatisfied with being ſo.

Palamede. Kind creature! where ſhall I find words to thank this compaſſion to a ſuffering lover?

Coriſca. Never trouble yourſelf about thanks, good actions, they ſay, reward themſelves.

Favonius. As for my part, I ſhall defer thoſe acknowledgements which your exceſs of goodneſs demands from me, both on my own ſcore and that of my friend, 'till to-morrow night, when they ſhall make part of that agreeable penance I am to perform.

This ſpeech of Favonius paved the way for a converſation conformable enough to the characters of the perſons engaged in it; but I am certain would not be well reliſh'd by that part of my readers which I am moſt ambitious of obliging; I ſhall therefore cloſe the ſcene, as indeed I did ſoon after my Tablets, and quitted the apartments of this fair libertine,

libertine, in order to retire to my own, and contemplate at leiſure on what I had ſeen and heard.

CHAP. II.

Preſents the reader with the cataſtrophe of an adventure very different from what the beginning may have given him reaſon to expect.

THO' I had thought myſelf too well acquainted with the principles and inclinations of Coriſca, to be at all ſurpriſed at any act of licentiouſneſs ſhe could poſſibly be guilty of, yet I could not defend my ſenſes from being ſeized with the extremeſt ſhock, on finding ſhe could be baſe enough to condeſcend to become the inſtrument of others pleaſures, and betray the innocence of a young lady for whom ſhe had as much friendſhip as is conſiſtent with a woman of her character;—forgetting all this while what the good old poet, Mr. Philip Maſſenger, tells us on an occaſion ſimilar to this of Coriſca and Emilia.

Virtue and Vice in one ſole point agree,
Each would be glad all like themſelves might be.

In ruminating very wiſely, as I then imagin'd, on what Coriſca had ſaid to Palemede, I muſt confeſs I entertain'd ſuſpicions not at all to the advantage of poor Emilia; I fancied that ſhe had in reality confeſs'd a paſſion for that gentleman, and Coriſca, in forming this contrivance to bring about a private interview between them, had done nothing but what ſhe was convinced in her own mind would be highly ſatisfactory to her fair friend. It was never my cuſtom, however, to place an entire dependance on conjecture, whether my own or that of another perſon, ſo reſolved to be as convinced as my Inviſible inſpection could make me. Accordingly the

next day in the afternoon I girded on my precious Belt and went to the houſe of Coriſca; Emilia was not yet come; but juſt as I arrived I heard her give orders to refuſe admittance to all of her own ſex except that lady, and alſo to all thoſe of the other except Favonius and Palamede.

As I doubted not but I ſhould be able to fathom the whole truth of this affair, by the converſation that would paſs between theſe two ladies while they believed themſelves alone together, I was extremely impatient for the approach of Emilia, and equally rejoiced when I ſaw her enter. The firſt ſalutations they gave each other were ſuch as might be expected from perſons who mutually profeſs'd ſo warm and tender a friendſhip; the ſubjects they afterwards talk'd upon were not of any conſequence; not one word of Palamede nor the projected tour was mention'd, on which I abſolved Emilia from all blame on this account, and was ſorry I had ever wronged her. But the leſs room I had to condemn, the greater cauſe I had to pity her, and to deteſt the cruel plot contrived, and ſo near being put in execution againſt her virtue; but I had no time to indulge meditation, the gentlemen preſently came in, the propoſal, as agreed upon between them and Coriſca, was immediately made, the ladies gave a ready aſſent, a hackney-coach was order'd to be call'd, and every one ſeemed equally on the wing to be gone.

The reader will now perhaps imagine, that it being eaſy to ſee into the end of this affair, there was no occaſion for any farther enquiries in relation to it, and that curioſity had received its utmoſt gratification; but I happen'd to be of a different way of thinking, I ſincerely pitied Emilia, and could not help being deſirous to ſee how ſhe would reſent the baſe artifice practiſed on her when ſhe ſhould diſcover it, and alſo how Coriſca would conduct the plot ſhe had contrived. It was no difficult

ficult matter for me to know the houſe they were going to, both by the deſcription I had heard given of it the day before by Coriſca, but alſo by what I had been told by other people concerning its commodiouſneſs for intrigue, ſo I no ſooner found a hackney-coach was ordered, than I haſtily quitted the poſt I was in, made the beſt of my way to the place of rendezvous, got there before them, took up my ſtand at the entrance, ſaw them alight, and follow'd them into a well-furniſhed ſpacious room, to which they were uſher'd by a ſpruce waiter.

Wine and biſcuits were immediately ſerved up, and the company, after having refreſh'd themſelves with this little regale, went to walk in the gardens, which I found indeed very pleaſant, well laid out into parterres and knots, and larger than I could have imagin'd; Favonius led Coriſca, and Palamede had Emilia by the hand, who, during this promenade, took the opportunity of entertaining her with many tender ſpeeches, but intermix'd with nothing that the moſt chaſte ear might not have liſten'd to without a bluſh upon the face. I was ſorry, however, to obſerve that ſhe receiv'd what he ſaid with a certain languiſhment in her eyes which embolden'd him to go on, and made me fear that he had indeed a ſecret aſcendancy over her uncautious, unſuſpecting heart.

On their return into the houſe a table was ſpread with every thing that could excite the appetite or exhilerate the ſpirits; the chearfulneſs and good humour of the gueſts gave a double reliſh to the repaſt; wit and ſparkling champaign crown'd the board; and tho' the ladies allay'd the too great potency of the one by the aſſiſtance of water, yet the other flow'd with no leſs ſtrength and vigour. After ſome hours had been paſſed in the height of gaiety, Coriſca on a ſudden looked upon her watch, and aſſuming a more ſerious air than ſhe was accuſtom'd

cuſtom'd to wear, told the company that it was near one o'clock, and they muſt think of departing for London; to which Favonius reply'd,

Favonius. Among all the ridiculous things mankind was ever guilty of, I know none more ſo than the having ſet their wits to work to invent a machine, and then ſubmitting to be govern'd by it.

Coriſca. There are many other laws, as well as this, by which the ſilly world have bound themſelves to go contrary to the primitive rules of nature and inclination, indulging by ſtealth only thoſe pleaſures which they were born freely to enjoy; but however, all theſe cuſtoms, diſagreeable as they are to people of real wit and ſpirit, muſt in ſome meaſure be complied with, or the ſtupid vulgar would preſently accuſe us of irregularity and indecency.

Palamede. I look upon every one here, madam, to be above the cenſures of the vulgar, yet I will not pretend to enter into any arguments on that head; and dare anſwer for Favonius, as well as for myſelf, that he would not preſume to detain you a moment beyond the time you think proper to go.

Emilia. Indeed, gentlemen, I think, and I believe Coriſca does ſo too, that to ſtay any longer at this time would rather diminiſh than add to the ſatisfaction we have hitherto enjoy'd.

Favonius. After ſuch a declaration, madam, any farther preſſures to the contrary on our part, might juſtly be look'd upon as impertinent and troubleſome; it is certainly your province to command, ours implicitly to obey.

In ſpeaking theſe laſt words, he went out of the room with Palamede, as it might be ſuppoſed to diſcharge the reckoning of the houſe; but in a few minutes return'd, and with a ſeeming concern in their faces ſaid, that the coachman, either by having got drunk or miſtaking his orders, had gone away ſoon after he had ſet them down; on which

Coriſca

Coriſca affected to be extremely ſurpriſed, and Emilia being really ſo, they both cry'd out at the ſame time.

Coriſca. This is the oddeſt accident ſure that ever happen'd.

Emilia. Bleſs me! which way ſhall we get home?

Palamede. As for going home, madam, it is a thing quite out of the queſtion; we have enquir'd, and there is no poſſibility of procuring either coach, chariot, poſt-chaiſe, or any ſort of carriage whatever, 'till the morning breaks; ſo, ladies, you muſt content yourſelves with being our gueſts for the remainder of the night.

Coriſca. Well, ſince it ſo, we muſt e'en make a virtue of neceſſity, and divert ourſelves as well as we can.

Palamede. It would be an unpardonable vanity in us, madam, to imagine that any thing in our converſation could compenſate for the want of your repoſe; we will therefore order a bed to be got ready for you two ladies, while Favonius and myſelf watch the approach of day, in order to provide a vehicle for carrying us to town.

Coriſca. No, no, by no means, we will all ſhare the ſame fate; it would be ſtrange, indeed, if four people of taſte and ſpirit could not find ſome way to amuſe each other for the ſpace of one night.

While ſhe was ſpeaking a concert of flutes, a hautboy, a double courtal, and ſome other wind-muſic, on a ſudden ſaluted their ears, — on which ſhe cry'd out,

Coriſca. Hark! muſic! if it continues, it will very well atone for the loſs of a few hours ſleep.

Emilia. Nothing ever happen'd ſo fortunately for me; I love muſic as I love my life, eſpecially of this ſort.

In ſpeaking this ſhe ran haſtily to the window and threw up the ſaſh, in order to hear the ſeveral inſtru-

inſtruments more diſtinctly; Palamede follow'd, and they both ſeem'd abſorb'd in a moſt profound attention for ſome minntes, which Favonius and Coriſca obſerving, took that opportunity of paſſing ſoftly behind them, and ſlipp'd out of the room. Emilia turning her head preſently after, with a deſign, as I ſuppoſe, to ſay ſomething either to the one or the other, was ſurpriſed at ſeeing neither of them there, and cry'd out to Palamede,

Emilia. Bleſs me! what is become of Favonius and Coriſca!

Palamede. I know not, madam; perhaps they are gone down into the garden, to be nearer to the muſic, which ſeems to proceed from the lower end of the walk.

Emilia. Very likely; they might have told us, however, but ſince it is ſo, we will follow them.

Palamede. With all my heart, madam; but firſt permit me to reveal a ſecret to you which you ought to be told, and my breaſt has long labour'd with an impatience of diſcovering.

Emilia. A ſecret! What ſecret can you have with me that would be worth loſing one note of this muſic to liſten to?

Palamede. I hope you will be of another opinion, madam, when I ſhall tell you that the whole happineſs of my future life, and even my ſoul's eternal peace, depends upon it.

Emilia. You may tell me what you will, but I ſhall believe nothing of the matter; ſo let us rejoin our friends.

It is not ſo much by what people ſay, as by the manner in which they deliver themſelves, that the ſincerity of their words may be gueſs'd at; and I was heartily glad to find, both by the looks of Emilia and the tone of her voice, that ſhe indeed had more inclination to do as ſhe had propoſed, than to ſtay and ſuffer herſelf to be entertain'd by Palamede in the

the way ſhe might eaſily perceive he was about to do it. The diſcreet intentions of this young lady, however, could avail her but little in her preſent ſituation; Palamede got between her and the door as ſhe was endeavouring to go out, and throwing himſelf upon his knees before her, and at the ſame time catching faſt hold of both her hands, ſaid to her,

Palamede. No, charming Emilia! I have not ſo long languiſhed for an opportunity like this to let it now eſcape me! you muſt, you ſhall hear me. By Heaven I love you! love you to the moſt raging height the paſſion can inſpire! For many, many tedious weeks, you have been the only object of my nightly viſions and waking thoughts,—and—

He was going on, but Emilia interrupted him by replying in theſe terms, accompanied with an air full of reſentment and confuſion.

Emilia. Fye, Palamede, this raillery is impertinent and inſipid, and what I could not have expected to be treated with by a perſon who has the character of good ſenſe and breeding.

Palamede. Cruelly urged; oh could you ſee into my heart you would find it all devoted to you! devoted to you with a tenderneſs ſo perfect as can be equall'd by nothing but the charms that have ſubdued it. Frown not, adorable Emilia, nor ſtruggle to get looſe; for by all my hopes, never will I quit the graſp I have taken of you, nor riſe from the poſture I am in, 'till I have convinced you of the ſincerity, as well as ardency, of the flame you have kindled in me.

Emilia. Sir, this nocturnal declaration is little conſiſtent with that reſpect which is always the attendant of an honourable paſſion: if you had, indeed, any thoughts of me of the nature you pretend, I am no recluſe, and you might have found a more proper ſeaſon to acquaint me with them.

Palamede.

Palamede. The paſſion I am inflamed with, is not of a nature to ſubmit to the dull forms obſerv'd by vulgar lovers. Beſides, what ſeaſon can be more fit for love than night, the friend of love? Turn your eyes towards the window and behold the ſilver moon, with all the thouſand twinkling ſtars; ſee how ſweet, how mild they ſhine, with what benevolent aſpects they dart their rays upon us; liſten to the melodious ſounds you juſt now prais'd; will not all theſe ſoften your ſoul, melt you into pity, and make you think ſuch love as mine deſerves ſome recompence?

Emilia. I'll hear no more; unhand me, ſir, and give me liberty to ſeek our friends, or be aſſured my cries ſhall raiſe the houſe.

He then let go her hands, and roſe from the poſture he had been in; but ſtill kept his back cloſe againſt the door, while with a half ſmile, he reply'd to what ſhe had ſaid in this manner:

Palamede. Madam, you are obeyed in part, and if I acquieſce to every thing you demand, it is not to be imagined you would be one jot leſs in my power than now;—our friends are too deeply engaged with each other to ſuffer themſelves to be interrupted; and as to the people of the houſe they know their diſtance, and are always extremely deaf on theſe occaſions.

On hearing him ſpeak thus ſhe burſt into a flood of tears, and throwing herſelf into a chair, cry'd out,

Emilia. Oh, heavens! is this poſſible! can Coriſca be ſo vile! am I betray'd! baſely given up by her to infamy and ruin!

On hearing her make this exclamation, he left the place where he had been ſtanding and ſeated himſelf near her, then taking one of her hands and preſſing it tenderly to his lips, ſpoke to this effect:

Palamede. Not ſo, my angel! by heaven, the tranſactions of this night ſhall be for ever a ſacred

and

and inviolable ſecret! not even Favonius nor Coriſca ſhall be acquainted with it if you deſire the contrary; I know they will laugh at me, but no matter, I can bear all that, and much more, to comply with the leaſt requeſt made by my dear Emilia; oh then be kind, and bleſs my longing wiſhes! let no reluctance damp the coming joys, but yield to ſhare the happineſs you give!

The conſternation of Emilia, on finding ſhe was expoſed to the danger ſhe now was in, by the very woman whom ſhe moſt had loved, and moſt believed her friend, had thrown her into ſo profound a reſverie, that I much queſtion whether ſhe heard any part of what Palamede had lately been ſpeaking to her, 'till cloſing his proteſtations with a ſtrenuous embrace, ſhe ſtarted up, broke from him, and looking wildly round the room ſhe eſpy'd two ſwords, which Favonius and Palamede had pluck'd off on their entrance, and put in a window,—ſhe ſnatch'd up one of them, and drawing it out of the ſcabbard in an inſtant, held the point to her breaſt, ſaying at the ſame time,

Emilia. Here is at leaſt a refuge from diſhonour;—that baſe woman, who thought to make me as vile as I now find ſhe is herſelf, ſhall meet with a diſappointment ſhe perhaps does not expect; if you offer to approach me, or advance one ſtep beyond the ſpot you ſtand upon, this goes into my heart.

The amazement, the ſhock, the confuſion Palamede was in at this action is altogether impoſſible to deſcribe; her words, her looks, her voice, convincing him ſhe was indeed in earneſt, he remain'd ſpeechleſs, without motion, his eyes fixed on her in a kind of ſtupid ſtare, and ſeem'd like one transfix'd with thunder; at length, recovering himſelf a little, he ſaid to her, in a faultering voice,

Palamede. For heaven's ſake, madam, wound not thus my ſoul by the ſight of your deſpair! you have

have no cauſe; it is certain that I long have lov'd you, but never had a thought of ſeducing your innocence; the plot to bring you hither was not of my contriving; 'tis true I came into it, as where is the man who would not? but be aſſured I am no raviſher, nor capable of owing my pleaſures to brutal violence: oh therefore throw aſide that cruel weapon, or turn the point on me, and if I make the leaſt attempt to offend your modeſty, bury it to the hilt within my boſom.

Emilia. Sir, I once look'd upon you as a man of honour, and ſhould rejoice to find you could redeem yourſelf in my opinion.

Palamede. By all that's ſacred, not the utmoſt gratification of my looſeſt wiſhes could have given me half the joy as now, to prove myſelf not wholly unworthy the eſteem of ſuch exalted virtue. Charming Emilia! perfect in mind as well as form! in both angelic! behold me your convert! The love I had for you is now rarified into adoration! your virtue, like chemiſts gold, turns all into itſelf, and leaves no groſſer particles behind! forgive what is paſt, and never—never more will I preſume to entertain you with diſcourſes leſs chaſte and pure than your own virgin thoughts!

Emilia. May I believe this penitence ſincere?

Palamede. You may, by heaven! and when I relapſe into my former crime, may infamy, diſeaſes, the contempt of the whole world, your eternal hatred, and every other curſe fall me!

Emilia. Then find ſome way, if poſſible, to take me immediately from this place, and conduct me ſafe to my apartment.

Palamede. My readineſs to obey you, madam, I hope, will prove the integrity of my preſent intentions, and be ſome atonement for the paſt; it is my happineſs to have it in my power to do what you require with much more eaſe than you imagine;

gine; you ſhall no longer, beautiful Emilia, be impoſed upon; the coachman whom he pretended had left us, has only put up at an inn not above forty yards diſtant from this houſe; I ſuppoſe he may be gone to bed by this time, as we told him we ſhould not return to London 'till the morning; but I will ſend and have him rouſed.

He had ſcarce made an end of ſpeaking theſe words, when he rang the bell, and a waiter coming preſently up, he gave him the neceſſary orders for fulfilling the promiſe he had juſt given to Emilia; on which that young lady, with the utmoſt ſatisfaction in her voice and eyes, cry'd out, 'This is truly 'honourable, indeed, and worthy of yourſelf.'

Something which that inſtant ſtarted into the mind of Palamede, hinder'd him from making any anſwer, or even, perhaps, from hearing what ſhe ſaid; he rang the bell a ſecond time with all his force, and call'd for pen, ink and paper, which being brought, he told Emilia that decency and good manners would not ſuffer him to depart without taking ſome notice of the occaſion to Favonius, with whom he had always lived in a perfect good underſtanding, and therefore entreated her permiſſion to write a few lines to that gentleman: the requeſt was too reaſonable not to be complied with, and he ſat down and dictated the following little epiſtle:

'My dear friend,

'Things have happen'd very different from what 'I was made to expect in regard to Emilia: in fine, 'ſhe is not a woman, but an angel; as ſuch I ſhall 'always eſteem her, and think it my glory to obey 'every command ſhe is pleaſed to lay upon me: the 'firſt ſhe has honour'd me with, is to remove her 'hence, and conduct her to her own apartment, 'which I am juſt now about to do. I have no op-

'portunity

'portunity to diſcharge the muſic or the expences 'of the houſe, ſo beg you will take the whole upon 'you, and meet me to morrow evening at Braund's, 'where we will ſup together and ſettle that affair. 'Make what compliments and excuſes you ſhall 'think proper for me to Coriſca, and believe me,

'Yours, &c.

'PALAMEDE.'

While Palamede was thus employ'd, it alſo came into Emilia's head to let Coriſca know ſome part of the reſentment ſhe had conceived againſt her; accordingly ſhe took another pen out of the ſtandiſh, and expreſs'd herſelf in theſe terms:

'MADAM,

'What the united report of all who know you 'could never have made me believe, your beha- 'viour this night has not only convinced me of, but 'alſo that the tongue of malice can find nothing 'wherewith to aggravate your real guilt. Was it 'not enough, oh, moſt ungenerous woman! to ſink 'your own honour and reputation in eternal infamy, 'but you muſt alſo endeavour to drag others into 'perdition with you! Know, to your confuſion, 'that I happily eſcaped the ſnare you had laid for 'me, and I ſhall reap this benefit by my late danger, 'as to avoid the company of a perſon whom to pre- 'ſerve an acquaintance with muſt in the end have 'been the ruin of my character if not of my virtue; 'for be aſſured, I ſhall henceforward be as careful 'to ſhun your preſence, as ever I was eager to come 'into it. Here ceaſes all farther intercourſe between 'us; may the diſappointment of your baſe deſigns 'on me, ſerve as a warning to you not to attempt 'the like on any other equally inadvertent and un- 'cautius, as the much deceiv'd

'EMILIA.'

They had juſt finiſh'd, and made up the above billets, when the waiter return'd and told Palamede that he had, tho' not without ſome difficulty, prevail'd on the coachman to riſe, and that before he left the inn, he had ſeen him go into the ſtable to bring out the horſes. Palamede then gave him the letter he had wrote to Favonius, ſaying, 'Be ſure to 'deliver this to the gentleman who came with us 'as ſoon as he ſhall be ſtirring, and let him know, 'I ſhall ſend the coach back in the morning. — Emilia alſo put into his hands her epiſtle to Coriſca, with theſe words: 'And let the lady know I left 'this for her.' The fellow reply'd, that they might depend he would be punctual in diſcharging the commiſſion they entruſted him with, and then withdrew.

Finding my Chriſtaline Tablets were now overcharged, I was obliged to ſhut them up, ſo can relate no farther particulars of what converſation paſs'd between Palamede and Emilia during the ſmall time they waited for the coach to carry them away; and can only ſay in general, that the greateſt reſerve and diſtance was obſerved on both ſides: Emilia, though now perfectly ſatisfied with the contrition of Palamede, thought it would be imprudent to appear too gay; and Palamede, fearful to renew her apprehenſions, behaved towards her with all the ſolemnity of a Chineſe Mandarin.

On their going down they were met at the bottom of the ſtairs by the woman who kept this tavern, or rather brothel; who uſhering in what ſhe had to ſay with a low curtſy, told Emelia that ſhe flattered herſelf with the expectation of her ſleeping there that night, and hoped nothing diſagreeable had happen'd to occaſion her departure at ſo unſeaſonable an hour; adding, that ſhe ſhould never forgive herſelf if any thing in her houſe had diſobliged ſo ſweet a young lady. Emilia anſwered this fawning

ſpeech

ſpeech only with a look of contempt; but Palamede told her, ſhe need be under no concern on that ſcore, the lady had no objections to her houſe, but choſe never to ſleep out of her own apartment. No more was ſaid; they went into the coach, and I follow'd on foot; for I had not curioſity enough to make me ſtay the remainder of the night in that place, for no other purpoſe than to ſee how Favonius and Coriſca would behave on being told that Palamede and Emilia were gone, and receiving the epiſtles that gentleman and lady had left for them. I had a long walk home; but my Inviſibility ſecured me from the danger of any inſults, and the ſatisfaction that roſe in my mind, on the noble conqueſt virtue had gain'd over vice, made the way ſeem much leſs tedious.

A few days after I was inform'd, by the report of the town, that Palamede made his public addreſſes to Emilia: being willing to be better convinced of the truth of this matter, I made ſeveral viſits to Emilia's apartment, and found that in fact the thing was as I had been told. Palamede, who really loved Emilia much more than perhaps he was ſenſible of himſelf, before this proof ſhe had given him of her virtue, got over that objection which the ſcantineſs of her fortune had before laid in his way; and Emilia, who had liked him as much as Coriſca had ſaid ſhe did, gave all the encouragement he could wiſh to his honourable paſſion. I look upon the affair to be now in a manner concluded on, and that a very ſhort time will conſummate their mutual wiſhes; a cataſtrophe, which I doubt not but every generous reader will heartily rejoice at as well as myſelf.

Favonius, who is in reality a man of ſtrict honour and good principles, though ſomewhat too ſanguine in his amours, ſtill continues his intimacy with Palamede, and highly applauds his converſion

in favour of the fair inſpirer of his honourable flame; Coriſca bites her lips whenever the name of Emilia is mention'd, and endeavours all ſhe can to traduce that virtue which ſhe had not the power to deſtroy; but all ſhe ſays on that ſcore ſerves only to ſhew more plainly her own bad heart; and Emilia, by refraining all converſation with her, has entirely regain'd that eſteem and good opinion which ſhe had well nigh loſt.

CHAP. III.

Contains the rehearſal of a converſation which the Author accidentally happened to be witneſs of, and looks upon himſelf as bound by an indiſpenſible obligation to make public; though perfectly conſcious, from his obſervations of mankind, that there are many of his readers who will labour all they can to bring theſe pages into diſcredit.

ONE whom I ſhall always rank among the number of our beſt Engliſh Authors, tells us in a juſtly eſteem'd poem, that

Wiſdom is ſtill to ſloth too great a ſlave,
None are ſo buſy as the fool and knave.

How widely different are the pictures drawn of a perſon whoſe prudence makes him act and talk with circumſpection and reſerve? How various are the repreſentations made of him? He has almoſt as many characters as there are ſpeakers of him; by the abundance one hears of him the judgment is diſtracted, and there is no forming a right idea of what he truly is. One cannot go into any company without hearing ſome mention made of Lord Honorius, yet one ſhall ſeldom find any two people agree in their opinion concerning him, either as

as to his abilities or principles, whether in religious, moral, or political matters. He is no follower of the court, yet does not totally avoid going thither; he profeſſes himſelf a member of the eſtabliſh'd church, yet converſes freely with thoſe of different perſuaſions; he liſtens attentively to the arguments urged by perſons of all parties and all ſects, without offering any of his own, or giving his opinion, which are wrong or which are right.

For this reaſon all the zealots, both in religion and politics, brand him with lukewarmneſs, and ſay he is a man of an uncertain way of thinking, and has no ſettled principle of acting. Some few there are who applaud his moderation, but many more, who look upon it as a piece of low cunning, thereby to cover ſome latent deſigns he had within his boſom, but of what nature theſe are I have heard many warm diſputes about. Some will needs have him in the intereſt of the Pretender, and others that he is ſecretly a tool of the Miniſtry: ſome have confidently averr'd, that they have ſeen a white roſe carry'd into his houſe on the 10th of June, and others that he has worn a yellow waiſtcoat on the birth-day of his preſent Majeſty; as if an innocent flower, or the colour of a piece of ſilk, were ſufficient tokens to ſhew the wiſhes of the wearer's heart.

As to his œconomy in private life, he is not at all expenſive in dreſs, equipage, or the furniture of his houſe, chuſing to appear below his rank than in any particular to exceed it. This is frequently attributed to his covetouſneſs, while more favourable judges ſuppoſe it to be owing to his contempt of the modiſh fopperies of the age. He partakes of all the pleaſures of the town, but never purſues them to an exceſs or with eagerneſs: the graver ſort of people aſcribe this to his diſcretion, and the more gay to want of ſpirit and coldneſs of conſtitu-

tion. Thus apt are we to form a vain judgment on things we know nothing of: the heart of man is incomprehenſible, unleſs diſcovered by himſelf in ſome glaring proof either of virtue or vice; the firſt he may not have an opportunity to ſet forth in any conſpicuous light, and the latter he may have artifice and hypocriſy enough to gloſs over and conceal. How impoſſible then is it to be certain to which of theſe he is in reality devoted!

Among the variety of deſcriptions and reports in relation to Lord Honorius, I found, notwithſtanding, that it was agreed on by all hands, that though he would not ſuffer himſelf to be impoſed upon by his tradeſmen, yet he always took care their bills ſhould be paid with the utmoſt exactneſs and punctuality, and that he never dealt with foreigners. Theſe articles, however inſignificant they may ſeem to ſome of thoſe who call themſelves the polite world, I confeſs, gave me ſuch an idea both of his prudence and juſtice, as made me immediately join with thoſe who ſpoke the greateſt things in his praiſe in other reſpects. But being deſirous of penetrating more deeply into the reality of this nobleman's diſpoſition, I reſolved to try how my Inviſibilityſhip would ſerve that end, and accordingly made a viſit one morning at his houſe.

I paſs'd through ſeveral neat rooms, the furniture of which was rich, and befitting the dignity and fortune of the owner; but had nothing of gaudineſs in it. At laſt I found the perſon I went to ſeek, he was in a cloſet within his dreſſing-room, and had a book in his hand: I was curious to ſee what was the ſubject of his meditations, and looking over his ſhoulder perceived it was the poems of our Engliſh Pindar, the celebrated Mr. Cowley;—the page he was employ'd in on my entrance contain'd, among others, theſe lines:

Oh

Oh fountains! when in you ſhall I,
Eas'd of unpeaceful thoughts, myſelf eſpy!
O fields! O woods! when ſhall I be made
The happy tenant of your ſhade!
Here's the ſpring-head of pleaſure's flood,
Where all the riches lie,
That ſhe has coin'd and ſtamp'd for good,
To charm the mind as well as eye.
Pride and ambition here,
Only in far-fetch'd metaphors appear;
Here's naught but winds can hurtful murmurs ſcatter,
And nought but echo flatter.
The Gods, when they deſcended hither
From Heaven, did always chuſe their way;
And therefore we may boldly ſay,
That is the way too thither.

When he came to this part of the poem, he ſtopp'd and cry'd out with the greateſt emphaſis, 'Charming inimitable Cowley! How juſt, how 'truly delicate are all thy notions, and how widely 'different from thoſe of the age I have the misfor-'tune to live in! If one may form a judgment, as 'ſure one may, by the writings of ſeventy or eighty 'years ago, the genius of Britain was far unlike 'what it appears at preſent.'

He had ſcarce finiſh'd this exclamation, when a ſervant open'd the door and told him, that Sir Whimſey Brainſick was come to wait upon him; on which he laid aſide the book, and went into the next chamber to receive his gueſt. After giving and returning the cuſtomary ſalutations of the morning, and having ſeated themſelves, the following dialogue enſued between them:

Honorius. 'Tis a wonder to ſee you dreſs'd and abroad thus early, Sir Whimſey: I think you are commonly in your firſt ſleep after this time.

Sir Whimſey. Ay, my Lord; but pleaſure muſt on ſome occaſions give way to buſineſs: I have vaſt affairs upon my hands at preſent; I only ſnatch'd a moment to take leave of your Lordſhip, and two hours hence ſhall ſet out for the country.

Honorius. On your election, I ſuppoſe?

Sir Whimſey. No, no; my Lord Traffli-Traffli has ſecur'd me a borough without my taking the trouble of ever going near it: my buſineſs at preſent is down at *******, where I have a conſiderable eſtate, and I believe a pretty good intereſt; and I have engaged myſelf to ſtrain both, as far as they will go, in favour of Sir Crafty Shallowbuggen.

Honorius. Sir Crafty Shallowbuggen! What then has Mr. Worthy, the preſent member, declined ſtanding?

Sir Whimſey. No, no, my Lord, he has not declined; but we are reſolved to have him out at any rate.

Honorius. I would not have you deceive yourſelf, Sir Whimſey; Mr. Worthy is a gentleman who I am told is highly eſteem'd by his conſtituents, and you may be at a great deal of expence to oppoſe him to no purpoſe.

Sir Whimſey. As to the expence, I don't doubt but it will be made up to me ſome way or other; I have my eye upon a place; and I can tell you, I am as good as promis'd either that or a ribband.

Honorius. The character I have heard of Mr. Worthy makes me ſorry ſo powerful an oppoſition ſhould be ſet on foot againſt him.

Sir Whimſey. He has been ſtubborn, my Lord, very ſtubborn; has voted againſt the Jew and Clandeſtine Marriage-bills; and it is not fit the Miniſtry ſhould be affronted. Your Lordſhip, I ſuppoſe, is a friend to the Miniſtry.

Honorius. Sir, I never gave any man reaſon to believe I was the contrary.

Sir

Sir Whimſey. No, no, your Lordſhip is too wiſe; thoſe who are friends to the Miniſtry are friends to themſelves: for my own part, if it were not to oblige them, I would not give two-pence who had the election at *****, or any where elſe. But I muſt beg your Lordſhip's pardon, I have a thouſand things to diſpatch, and would not be waited for by four or five gentlemen who accompany me on the ſame expedition, ſo your Lordſhip's moſt obedient.

Honorius. Yours, Sir Whimſey, I wiſh you a good journey.

With theſe words they parted — Lord Honorius ſaw him to the top of the ſtaircaſe, and then turn'd back to his cloſet, ſaying to himſelf as he went, — 'What a wild world is this! How do men toil to 'bring infamy on themſelves, and entail certain 'ruin on themſelves!'

As I thought, by the little ſample I had ſeen, that it was now in my power to make a better judgment of the ſentiments of this nobleman than by all I had heard from others, I was following Sir Whimſey down ſtairs; but on hearing ſome debate between a plain honeſt-looking countryman and a ſpruce footman, who, as I found afterwards, had been but lately taken into my Lord's ſervice, I ſtopp'd ſhort to liſten to the occaſion. I ſoon perceived that the countryman was deſirous of ſpeaking to his Lordſhip, and the fellow judging by appearances, thought it too great a preſumption, and would fain have turn'd him from the door; but the ruſtick was not ſo eaſily repulſed as the other had imagined: the firſt words I could hear diſtinctly were as follow:

Footman. I tell you, friend, I know not whether my Lord is at home or not, or if he is, whether he pleaſes to be ſeen: —— but if you let me know what buſineſs you have with him, and

from whom you come, I will take care his Lordſhip ſhall be inform'd, and you may have your anſwer to-morrow.

Countryman. Goodlack, Mr. Skipjack, who are you? my Lord is not uſed to have ſuch malepert fellows about him: but if I muſt not ſee my Lord, pray let me ſpeak to Mr. Downright, the gentleman that dreſſes and waits upon him, he knows me well enough, and will give me a better anſwer.

The footman then vouchſafed to call the perſon he mention'd, and the countryman had the ſatisfaction to find himſelf well received: Mr. Downright ſhook him cordially by the had, told him he was glad to ſee him in London, and aſk'd him what buſineſs had brought him hither; to which the other reply'd,

Countryman. In good troth I did not come upon pleaſure, I have buſineſs, very great buſineſs with my Lord, and would fain ſpeak to him, if ſo be I may have liberty to come into his preſence, as you know, Mr. Downright, I have done many a good time in the country; but that Mr. Finikin there, with his pig-tail wig, ſtands as it were like a mud-wall to keep every body off the houſe.

Mr. Downright. Oh, he did not know you, Mr. Goodacre; and beſides, he has lived in families where nobody without a coach or chair are admitted; but I will acquaint my Lord you are here, he is alone, and I am ſure will ſee you.

Countryman. Thank you Mr. Downright: it is well there are ſome civil people in this ſame town.

Mr. Downright then went on his meſſage; the footman look'd very ſheepiſh and ſneak'd away, while the countryman ſtrutted about the hall as great as an emperor, 'till the valet returned and deſired him to walk up. As I took Mr. Goodacre for

for one of my Lord's tenants, and imagin'd he was only come on the ſcore of renewing a leaſe, or ſome other country affairs relating to himſelf, which I had no manner of curioſity to pry into, I was in ſome debate within myſelf whether I ſhould ſtay or go directly out of the houſe, the door being then open; but a certain impulſe, the meaning of which I cannot account for, ſway'd me to purſue my firſt thought, and I turn'd back and accompanied him into the preſence of my Lord, from whom he met with a reception not commonly given by perſons of quality to a man of his plain appearance, except on particular occaſions. His Lordſhip made him ſit down in a chair very near himſelf, and, with a ſmiling countenance and the greateſt affability in his voice and air, told him he was glad to ſee him look ſo well and hearty; that he hoped his wife and family enjoy'd the ſame ſhare of good health; and then aſk'd what buſineſs had brought him up to London: to the former part of theſe obliging ſpeeches he only anſwered with ſeveral low bows; but to the latter reply'd in theſe terms:

Goodacre. Why, my Lord, your Lordſhip knows we are going to have a new parliament, and belike there will be a great buſtle all over the kingdom about elections; and no wonder if there be; every one makes us ſuch fair promiſes when they come to aſk us for our votes, that 'tis a hard matter to know which we can moſt depend upon; we have been ſerved baſely, very baſely, by ſome of our repreſentatives, and it behoves us to be very cautious for the future.

Honorius. Very true, Mr. Goodacre, it does ſo indeed; and I hope the nation will think ſo.

Goodacre. Now as to our borough, no man could make finer ſpeeches to us, or pretend he had our intereſt more at heart, than 'Squire Earnly, before he was choſen; yet he no ſooner got into the

houſe, than he ſhew'd he did not care a ſtraw for us, laugh'd at all our petitions and remonſtrances; and, I am told, made a merit of it to the Miniſtry.

Honorius. I am afraid there are too many who have done ſo. Does the ſame gentleman ſet up again?

Goodacre. No, my Lord; he would have no chance for it if he did; we know him too well, he ſees that well enough; but 'tis thought, however, that he will get in for ſome place or other.

Honorius. Nothing more likely. But do you hear who intends to offer himſelf in his ſtead?

Goodacre. Yes, my Lord; great intereſt is already making for one Capt. Saſhbright: he is as fine a perſon, indeed, as the ſun ſhines upon; but we know nothing of him; he is recommended by Sir Courtly Jobber, and has brought a power of money down with him: they went together in Sir Courtly's coach to ******* fair, bought a many things, and gave them to every body about them; guineas and broad pieces fly about like hail; any one, almoſt, may have them for picking up.

Honorius. So then he may eaſily carry it, I ſuppoſe?

Goodacre. I cannot tell that, my Lord; there was a numerous meeting at the Roſe about a fortnight ago, and 'Squire Wellwood of the Green was put in nomination; his family has been ſettled for a long time at *******; he lives moſt part in the country, does a great deal of good among the poor, and is mainly beloved.

Honorius. I know him, Mr. Goodacre; he is certainly a very worthy gentleman.

Goodacre. Ay, my Lord, he would have it all to nothing, if it was not for one conſideration.

Honorius. What is that?

Goodacre. The Captain has promiſed, that if he gets his election, he will procure an act of Parliament

liament for a new road to be cut, at the Government's expence, from ***** to *****, which your Lordſhip knows would be a great advantage to our market.

Honorius. A very great one, indeed.

Goodacre. Ay, my Lord, if we were ſure it would be done; but there lies the query. Some people will promiſe any thing to gain their point, and never think of it afterwards. We all know 'Squire Wellwood to be a noble gentleman, and ſo may Capt. Saſhbright too, he may or he may not. Now we are ſtrangely divided in our opinions, whether we ought to leave the certain good for the uncertain better, and have at length reſolved to be decided by your lordſhip.

Honorius. By me!

Goodacre. Yes, my Lord, we know your Lordſhip to be a wiſe man, and a true lover of your country.

Honorius. I have always thought, Mr. Goodacre, that to meddle in theſe things would prove me deſerving neither of the one nor the other of the epithets you give me; every elector ought to give his vote according to the dictates of his conſcience, and not ſuffer himſelf to be ſway'd by any intereſt or motive whatever; and for a nobleman, or other perſon of diſtinction, to attempt, either by menaces or cajolings, to make them act to the contrary, appears to me to be the moſt groſs encroachment on liberty that can be offered.

Goodacre. But here the caſe is widely different, my Lord.

Honorius I grant it is. — You deſire my advice as a friend, not ſubmit to be governed by me as a director; it would therefore be ungenerous and even cruel, in me to ſuffer you to be deluded by falſe pretences, when it is ſo eaſily in my power to put you upon your guard againſt them. In the

firſt place, you ought to conſider, that Capt. Saſh-bright, whatever his character may otherwiſe be, is an officer in the army, and as ſuch it is his intereſt to promote the continuance of a ſtanding army, and conſequently of thoſe taxes which are neceſſary for the ſupport of it. In the ſecond, Sir Courtly Jobber, who it ſeems is the perſon who recommends him, has for a long time, to my certain knowledge, been an agent for the miniſtry, and is indebted for his title, and the beſt part of the eſtate he is in poſſeſſion of, merely to the good ſervices he has rendered them.

Goodacre. Ay marry, theſe things are worth thinking of indeed: ſo I ſuppoſe, my Lord, the money he ſo plentifully throws about is none of his own?

Honorius. Not a doit, he will be reimburs'd with intereſt.

Goodacre. And yet I know not, my Lord, but there may be ſome among us fooliſh enough to be inveigled by this bait. Alackaday! we country people are ignorant of ſuch practices; we little think what the great folks in town are doing, and a many there are that would not believe a word of it without good authority. Oh I wiſh your Lordſhip were down at Egum-Hall at this critical juncture.

Honorius. I will be there, Mr. Goodacre, in ſpite of the averſion I have always had to appear at elections, or to diſtinguiſh myſelf on any occaſion; my love to the place which gave me birth, and good will to my countrymen, ſhall overbalance all other conſiderations; I will do all I can to ſtrengthen the weak eyes which are in danger of being dazzled with Sir Courtly's gold, and ſhew them the falſe luſtre of his fleeting promiſes.

Goodacre. Heaven bleſs your Lordſhip! a noble reſolution!

Honorius.

Honorius. When do you return, Mr. Goodacre?

Goodacre. I ſhall lie but this one night in town, my Lord, and ſet out betimes to-morrow morning.

Honorius. I will not be two days behind you; in the mean time you may tell them what I ſay.

Goodacre. It will be joyful news to ſome.

There paſſed no farther converſation between them; the honeſt countryman roſe up to take his leave, full of tranſport at the ſucceſs of his negotiation; but Lord Honorius would not permit him to depart till he had rung the bell for Mr. Downright, and given orders that he ſhould be made welcome with the beſt entertainment the houſe afforded; I left him to accept the invitation, and returned to my apartment, well ſatisfied in my mind that I was now enabled to form a right judgment of this nobleman's principles and diſpoſition.

CHAP. IV.

Preſents the reader with the detail of a very remarkable incident, which, I believe, if conſidered with a due attention, there are but few people, eſpecially of the fair ſex, who will not find themſelves enabled to become better members of ſociety by having peruſed.

A Certain ſacred writer tells us, that the tongue is an unruly member, and preaches much concerning the government of it; but I dare not preſume to inſiſt too much on his authority, as he has been, with others of his cotemporaries, pretty much exploded; and I might be looked upon, by my polite readers, as a very old-faſhioned filly fellow to make any mention of him. But I may venture, without running the riſk of being read with a horſe-

horſe laugh, to quote the words of another very great and learned perſon of a more modern date, who ſays, that the tongue is the moſt dangerous of all weapons; that it is capable of deſtroying all peace, all love, all harmony in the world; of ſowing diſſentions among families; of diſuniting the hearts of the deareſt friends and relations; of ruining the reputation and fortune of whomſoever it is levell'd againſt; and that even murders and the worſt of miſchiefs may be occaſioned by it.

That the tongue, when it becomes the inſtrument of a mailcious heart, carries a thouſand daggers in it, is a truth which the obſervation of every one evinces. But this is not all; public abuſe or private ſcandal, defamation and detraction, are not the only vices of the tongue; an unguarded word is frequently productive of the moſt unhappy conſequences; it wounds, as it were, by chance-medley, and a perſon may be ſtabbed in the moſt tender part without any intention in the giver of the blow. A talkative diſpoſition, or, in other words, a paſſion for repeating every thing one ſees and hears, or even gueſſes at, is extremely dangerous to ſociety; and tho' it is a foible proceeding rather from levity than ill nature, ſometimes produces the ſame effects; thoſe guilty of it, perhaps, may mean no hurt; but, alas! they conſider not how far the perſon to whom they are ſpeaking may be intereſted in the report they make, and that what they imagine of no moment may ſtab him to the quick. Nothing is more common than for people to hurt thus at random, and by their raſhneſs to occaſion accidents, which, if they foreſaw, they would be moſt careful to prevent, — as a late poet emphatically enough expreſſes it:

Thinking to ſhoot my arrow o'er the houſe,
I have kill'd my brother.

But

But this inadvertency, as great a weakneſs as it doubtleſs is, has in it ſomewhat yet more excuſeable than to reveal a ſecret which we are conſcious muſt give the hearer pain. I confeſs that this is ſometimes done through good-will; but then it is a very miſtaken good-will in many caſes. If I know a perſon ſuſtains an injury, and has it in his power to redreſs the grievance, it is certainly my duty to acquaint him with it; but when the evil is without a remedy, it is infinitely more kind to ſuffer him to remain in ignorance. To be well deceived, is almoſt equal to not being deceived at all, our happineſs conſiſts in the imagination of it; and if we firmly believe ourſelves poſſeſs'd of what we wiſh, it is the ſame thing as being ſo in reality: How cruel is it then for any one to draw back the friendly curtain that hides ill fortune from us, and compel us to behold our wretchedneſs! Every one who is thus unhappily undeceived may cry out with Bellamira in the play.

——————— *Ah, cruel friend!*
Why did'ſt thou wake me from my dream of bliſs?
Why bring me from that ſcene of fancied joys,
To one of real anguiſh, horror, and deſpair!

Many unhappy inſtances of theſe well-meant ill offices have come to my knowledge ſince I was in poſſeſſion of the Gift of Inviſibility; but I ſhall recite only one of them, which, as it is a very late tranſaction, and but few people know the real truth of, is at preſent a matter of much ſpeculation among thoſe who are any way acquainted with the parties concerned, or have even heard their names.

Meroveus and Deidamia were an extreme happy pair, the railers againſt marriage could find nothing in the conduct of either of them to countenance any ſarcaſms on that ſtate; the moſt tender affec-

tion

tion had been the chief, if not the ſole motive of the union between them; and the ſecure and uninterrupted poſſeſſion of each other, inſtead of diminiſhing, ſeemed rather to increaſe their mutual ardour, and their firſt bridal fondneſs appeared in their behaviour after having ſerved a more than ſeven years apprenticeſhip to Hymen. Yet, how on a ſudden, have we found all this ſweet ſerenity turned into ſtorms and tempeſts! Meroveus and Deidamia, who it was thought could not have lived a ſingle week out of each other's preſence, are now parted, according to all probability, parted, to meet no more in love.

Beſides the many great accompliſhments which juſtified the affection they ſo long had towards each other, both of them were accounted perſons of an excellent underſtanding and ſolid ſenſe; nothing therefore could have more amazed the world than that they ſhould come to this open rupture; even though ſome little cauſe of complaint had happen'd either on the one ſide or the other. An event ſo ſtrange, ſo little dream'd of, put all conjecture to a ſtand; people pretended not even to gueſs what ſhould be the occaſion, much leſs to unravel ſo great a myſtery, the accompliſhment of that work was reſerved by fate for the Inviſible Spy alone. The manner in which I made this diſcovery, I ſhall relate as conciſely, as the converſation which let me into it will admit of.

As I was one day taking a ſolitary walk on Conſtitution-Hill, I ſaw Deidamia leaning on the arm of Eutracia, a lady of birth and fortune, who had been bred up with her at the boarding-ſchool, and ever ſince been her moſt intimate friend and companion; juſt as they approached the place where I was, the following dialogue began between them.

Deidamia.

Deidamia. Now for the ſecret you have to tell me; methinks I have a more than ordinary impatience to hear it, and we cannot be more retired; not a living ſoul is near us, and there is no danger of any one coming to interrupt our diſcourſe, as all the world are in the Mall.

Eutracia. I will not keep you long in ſupence, my dear; but firſt you muſt anſwer two or three queſtions I have to aſk you, and then reſolve to arm yourſelf with all the fortitude you are miſtreſs of, not to be too much ſhocked at what I ſhall relate.

Deidamia. I cannot conceive that there is any thing which either you or any one elſe can tell me, capable of giving me a ſhock. But pray, what is it you would know from me?

Eutracia. The town looks upon you as one of the moſt happy women in it; is it true that you are really ſo?

Deidamia. Indeed, my dear, I think myſelf ſo; and if I ſhould labour to be more bleſs'd; know not how to form a ſingle wiſh beyond what I poſſeſs.

Eutracia. There are many private cauſes of diſquiet, which prudence obliges us to conceal. Are you thoroughly convinced of the affection of your huſband?

Deidamia. I never had the leaſt cauſe to doubt it; and the tenderneſs I have for him is ſo ſincere and delicate, as I think would make me eaſily perceive a want of it in him. But wherefore do you aſk? you cannot have any reaſon to ſuſpect him.

Eutracia. Ah, poor Deidamia!

Deidamia. Why do you ſigh, and look ſo piteouſly upon me? ſome wretch has certainly belyed Meroveus to you.

Eutracia. No: but one more interrogatory and I have done. Does he never abſent himſelf without

out letting you know where he goes! never lie out of his own houſe?

Deidamia. Very ſeldom, and that but lately; an intimate friend of his makes his addreſſes to a young lady at Hammerſmith, he frequently deſires my huſband's company with him, and they ſometimes ſtay all night, when having ſupp'd there, it is dangerous to return to London, as the roads are now infeſted.

Eutracia. How eaſy is it to deceive the innocent! Meroveus is a villain.

Deidamia. How Eutracia! a villain! had any other called him ſo, my reſentment ſhould have ſhewn how much I deſpiſed ſo baſe an accuſation.

Eutracia. Alas! 'tis your own love and honour makes you ſo tenacious of his; but he is falſe in both: and I again repeat the name, he is a villain, and will put it in your power to prove him ſo, by the teſtimony of your own eyes and ears, provided you promiſe to give him no previous hints that you have diſcovered, or even ſuſpect his perfidy.

Deidamia. But how! how, Eutracia, is he a villain!

Eutracia. He keeps a miſtreſs, ſome common wench no doubt; but he adores, doats on her, pretends himſelf her huſband, and thoſe nights when you imagine him at Hammerſmith, he paſſes with her.

The tender Deidamia was now ſo overcome at theſe words, that her ſpirits quite forſook her, and ſhe muſt certainly have fallen on the earth, if they had not happened to be very near a bench at the lower end of the walk, where Eutracia placed her; the keeper of the gate perceiving her condition, was ſo humane as to run and fetch ſome water, which being ſprinkled on her face ſoon brought her to herſelf. Eutracia, on ſeeing her fair friend thus agitated

agitated, ſeem'd, and I believe really was, very much concerned at what ſhe had ſaid; for ſhe could not reſtrain ſome tears from falling down her eyes, while ſhe expreſs'd herſelf in theſe terms: 'My deareſt Deidamia, if I had not thought you 'would have received this intelligence with more 'moderation, you ſhould have been for ever ig-'norant of it.' The afflicted lady made no reply to theſe words, but in a few minutes growing ſomewhat more compoſed, quitted the bench, and leaning on Eutracia, the converſation was renewed in this manner:

Deidamia. Oh, Eutracia! little are you capable of conceiving the agonies this poor diſtracted bleeding heart ſuſtains! Yet I muſt know all. Tell me by what means you got information of this horrid ſecret, and how you are aſſured of its veracity!

Eutracia. It was not my intention to conceal any part of it: but you muſt determine to liſten with calmneſs to me.

Deidamia. I will.

Eutracia. Well then, I will tell you all. I believe you know Mrs. Flounceit, my mantua-maker.

Deidamia. I ſaw her once; you may remember I was with you when ſhe brought home your laſt new ſack.

Eutracia. That woman, you muſt know, has an intereſt with ſome foreign merchants, and can frequently oblige her cuſtomers with ſome curious things which are prohibited to be ſold in public; ſhe came laſt Monday, and acquainted me that ſhe had ſeveral patterns of the moſt beautiful chints that ever were ſeen; I went the next morning in order to ſee them, and was carried into a back parlour for the ſake of privacy. As I was looking over the goods I heard a man call from the top of the ſtair-

caſe

caſe to know if the coach was come; I thought myſelf perfectly acquainted with the voice, tho' I could not juſt then recollect whoſe it was; but preſently after ſaw Meroveus lead a woman croſs the garden, at the lower end of which there is a little door, that opens into another ſtreet; a pebble, or ſome ſuch thing; happening to lie in the walk, ſhe ſtumbled in paſſing, on which he cry'd out with the greateſt tenderneſs, 'I hope you are not 'hurt, my love!' — 'No, reply'd ſhe briſkly, — 'not at all, I cannot receive any harm when 'my guardian angel is ſo near.. —I was ſo aſtoniſhed at what I ſaw and heard, that I had not power to ſpeak, 'till Mrs. Flounceit ſeeing me look earneſtly after them, told me they were her lodgers; that they were lately married; but ſome reaſons obliging them to keep it private, they met each other there only once or twice a week; 'ſo, ſaid 'ſhe, I have very little trouble with them, and 'they pay me a good rent.' — 'But are you ſure, 'cry'd I, that they are man and wife? it may be 'an intrigue.' — 'No, anſwered ſhe, they were 'recommended to me by a gentleman who for-'merly lodged with me himſelf, one Sir David 'Townly.'

Diedamia. Oh heavens! Sir David Townly! Why he is the very perſon my huſband pretends he goes with to Hammerſmith.

Eutracia. 'Tis likely he may be his confidante in this amour.

Deidamia. Yet ſtill I know not how to think it real, one man may be like another. Are you certain it was Meroveus whom you ſaw?

Eutracia. As certain as that he is Deidamia to whom I am talking. — Did he not lie abroad laſt Monday night?

Deidamia. He did.

Eutracia.

Eutracia. And had he not on a dark-brown velvet coat, and a black waiſtcoat trimmed with bugles?

Deidamia. He had. Oh I can no longer ſhut my eyes againſt conviction! the dreadful truth is too glaring to be reſiſted, and I ſee myſelf the moſt miſerable of women!

Eutracia. Do not think ſo, rather exert the ſpirit of an injur'd wife, detect him in his guilt, ſhame him to repentance, and make him ſue for pardon.

Deidamia. Oh, that ſuch love as ours has been, ſhould come to this!

Eutracia. All yet may be retriev'd; your juſt reproaches may make him loath his paſt follies, and become more yours than if he never had tranſgreſs'd: the next time he takes his pretended journey to Hammerſmith, let me know it.

Deidamia. He is gone thither now; juſt before you came to call me to the Park he told me Sir David had engaged his company, and he believed he ſhould not return 'till morning.

Eutracia. Well then he ſhall be met, my dear Deidamia, he ſhall be met by thoſe he leaſt expects or deſires to ſee; I will take you in the morning to Mrs. Flounceit's, under pretence of bringing her a new cuſtomer; there you will have the ſame opportunity I had of diſcovering your huſband's guilt, and may act as you ſhall judge proper on the occaſion.

Deidamia. How ſhall I contain myſelf! — baſe — baſe man! — cruel deceiver of my fond, my unſuſpecting heart! How bear the ſight of that vile ſhe! — that infamous deluder of his honour! — that curſed ſhe who has robbed me of the only treaſure I valued upon earth, my huſband's heart.

Here

Here ſhe burſt into the moſt vehement exclamations; but my Chriſtaline Remembrancer being already overcharged, I can only ſay that her behaviour verify'd the words of Mr. Nat. Lee, who in his deſcription he gives of the paſſions of womankind in general, has theſe lines:

They ſhrink at thunder, dread the ruſtling wind,
And glitt'ring ſwords the brighteſt eyes will blind;
Yet when ſtrong jealouſy enflames the ſoul,
The weak will rage, and calls to tempeſts roll.

The ladies continued their walk 'till Phœbus beginning to withdraw his beams, they both thought proper to retire from the approaching dews. Eutracia, juſtly apprehending the agitations of her friend would become more violent, if left alone, and at liberty to indulge them, offered to be her companion that night, which the other gladly accepted, and I ſaw them take coach together for Deidamia's houſe, after which I went home.

CHAP. V.

Which, according to the Author's opinion, ſtands in no need of a prelude, as it contains only the ſequel of an adventure too intereſting to all degeees of people not to demand the attention of every reader.

I WAS truly concerned at the injuſtice which I perceived poor Deidamia ſuſtained, and but little pleaſed with Eutracia, either for the information ſhe had given her of it, or for adviſing her to detect Meroveus in the manner concerted between them; indeed, I feared that the conſequences of ſuch an interview would be only to make the huſband become more hardened in his guilt, and her affliction increaſe by finding her reſentment diſregarded.

Few

Few men can bear reproofs, much leſs reproaches. If ever they quit a darling folly, the reformation muſt come of themſelves; it muſt proceed from a conſciouſneſs they have done amiſs, not from being told ſo by others. There is a pride in human nature which diſdains admonition, and makes us perſiſt in error, which, if not taken notice of, perhaps in time we might diſcover to be ſuch, grow aſhamed of and amend. Beſides, remonſtrances from a perſon whom we look upon as any way our inferior, either in point of underſtanding or circumſtances, will be ſo far from having any weight, that they will rather add to our contempt, and it may be raiſe in us an utter averſion to the giver. Cuſtom has made the huſband ſo much the head of the wife, that, tenacious of his authority, it is but ſeldom he ſubmits to be influenced by her in matters of much leſs moment to him than his pleaſures.

Indeed, when a woman is wrong'd in the manner Deidamia was, it muſt be confeſs'd that the ſhock is greatly trying, and that ſhe has the ſtrongeſt reaſon for complaining; yet will ſhe ſtill find it moſt prudent to forbear: love and gentleneſs are the only weapons by which that ſex can hope to conquer, and ſhe who attempts to have recourſe to any other, only hurts herſelf. By ſeeming not to ſuſpect her huſband's vices, ſhe will, at leaſt, oblige him to keep them as private as he can, and alſo to treat her with all the reſpect due to her character, and the ſacred union between them; whereas by growing clamorous and impatient, ſhe furniſhes him with a pretence to uſe her ill, and turns the indifference he before had for her into hatred and deteſtation.

One of our beſt poets has an obſervation on this head, which I think is very well worthy of the ſerious attention of all who are either injured in

reality, or imagine themſelves to be ſo, yet find it their intereſt to preſerve an amicable correſpondence with the perſon guilty of the injury; as it is certain that no man, detected in the thing which he wiſhes to conceal, can ever love the perſon by whom he is detected. The words of the author I mention'd are theſe:

Forgiveneſs to the injur'd does belong;
But they ne'er pardon who have done the wrong.

Theſe reflections, together with my impatience to ſee how Deidamia would ſupport the full conviction of her huſband's falſhood, ſo much took up my mind, that it was a conſiderable time before I remember'd how great an impediment lay between me and the gratification of my curioſity. Mrs. Flounceit's houſe was to be the ſcene of action, and the ladies, during their whole converſation, had made no mention in what ſtreet, nor even in what quarter of the town, that woman lived: however, as I ſuppoſed her to be a noted woman in her buſineſs, I hoped to get over this difficulty, and did ſo, by ſending an emiſſary to enquire among the mercers, hoop-petticoat-makers, and other ſuch people who are employ'd in the equipment of the ladies, and I went not to bed without receiving the direction I ſtood in need of.

As I knew not the hour in which Meroveus and the partner of his looſer pleaſures would be preparing to depart, nor that in which Deidamia would be conducted by Eutracia to behold this proof of her misfortune, I took care to go very early to Mrs. Flounceit's, and was obliged to wait a conſiderable time before the door happen'd to be open'd, to let any one paſs in or out: —— at laſt, however, it was ſo, I got an opportunity to enter, went into the back parlour, and poſted myſelf in that

that corner of it which I thought would be the ſafeſt and moſt commodious. My patience was not here put to any long trial: the ladies arriv'd a few minutes after I came, uſher'd into the room by Mrs. Flounceit, who placed them on a ſettee with a great deal of formal complaiſance, and then made ſome apologies, as many people do when they are dreſs'd as well as they can be, for being in ſuch a diſhabille, and not in the order ſhe could wiſh to receive them.

It was eaſy for me to perceive, by Deidamia's countenance, how ill ſhe had paſs'd the night: Eutracia alſo ſeem'd in ſome agitation, though ſhe diſſembled it as well as ſhe was able; and after giving ſome ſlight anſwer to Mrs. Flounceit's compliments, told her ſhe had brought a friend to look over ſome of her fine things; on which the mantua-maker immediately open'd a large preſs, and brought out ſeveral pieces of chints, with ſome French brocades and rich Italian ſilks: theſe ſhe ſpread upon a table, accompanying that action with many praiſes on the beauty and curioſity of each. But it was in vain ſhe boaſted, in vain ſhe magnified, all ſhe ſaid, as well as the real merit of the goods ſhe exhibited to ſale, was wholly loſt on Deidamia: the mind of that afflicted lady was too much bent on thoſe things which ſhe expected to be witneſs of, to have any eyes or ears for thoſe which were not preſent to her; ſhe took up firſt one piece, and then another, but without ſeeming to know what ſhe did; and had ſomething ſo diſtracted in her airs and geſtures, that Eutracia was obliged to keep Mrs. Flounceit in diſcourſe, to prevent her taking any notice of it. Her behaviour, join'd with my knowledge of the cauſe, reminded me of Mr. Dryden's words, which, if ſhe had been inclined to think of poetry, ſhe

might pretty juſtly have apply'd to her own condition in this criſis:

Love, juſtice, nature, pity, and revenge,
Have kindled a wildfire in my breaſt;
I am all a civil war within,
And like a veſſel, ſtruggling in a ſtorm,
Require more hands than one to keep me upright.

But if ſhe was ſo little able to ſupport the bare idea of the ſhock ſhe came on purpoſe to receive, what muſt ſhe endure when ſuſpence, and all the remains of hope, were ſwallow'd up in the cruel certainty of her misfortune, and conviction left no farther room for doubt? The maid of the houſe came into the room with a chocolate-pot in her hand, and told her miſtreſs that the gentleman and lady above ſtairs, gave their compliments, and deſired the favour of her company to breakfaſt with them. Mrs Flounceit was about to make ſome anſwer to this invitation, when Deidamia, not able to contain herſelf, flew out of the parlour, and directly up ſtairs, where ſhe found Meroveus and a young woman ſitting on the ſide of the bed they had but lately quitted.

Deidamia had ſcarce enter'd the chamber when ſhe ſurpriſed the guilty pair with theſe words: 'I 'have a right, ſir, to think my company ought to 'be as acceptable to Meroveus as that of Mrs. 'Flounceit, or any other woman.'

Eutracia had followed Deidamia as faſt as ſhe could, in order, I ſuppoſe, to prevent any deſperate effects of her preſent paſſion, and I was not far behind; but it will be more eaſy for the reader to conceive the ſurprize which appear'd in the looks of Meroveus than for me to expreſs it: he ſtarted up, and with a voice which the various emotions of his mind rendered almoſt unintelligible, ſaid to her:

Meroveus.

Meroveus. Confuſion!— Deidamia! — madam, what brings you here!

Deidamia. That is a queſtion, which ought rather to be put to you. I came in purſuit of an ungrateful, too much beloved huſband; you to indulge a lawleſs flame for an abandoned proſtitute.

Meroveus. Madam, — madam, this does not become you.

Deidamia. Does it become you, ſir, to leave your honeſt home and wife, — make pitiful excuſes for your abſence, and ſkulk in corners with a wretch like this, — this abject hireling of licentious wiſhes!

Miſtreſs. Madam, I would not have you think I am any ſuch perſon: I did not know Meroveus was a married man.

Deidamia. 'Tis falſe, vile creature! you could not know Meroveus without knowing he had a wife; a wife, who, without boaſting, is every way his equal: but get out of my ſight, that I may have liberty to aſk my perjur'd huſband what he could ſee in that face of yours to be preferr'd to mine.

On this, Meroveus was opening his mouth to ſpeak, but was prevented by Mrs. Flounceit, who being aſtoniſh'd on the lady's running up ſtairs, and by the noiſe ſhe immediately heard above, had hobbled up as faſt as her fat would give her leave, and came into the room that moment, crying as ſhe enter'd,

Mrs. Flounceit. Bleſs me! what is the matter here?

Deidamia. Perhaps, madam, you are ignorant that your houſe is made a brothel.

Mrs. Flounceit. Oh, my ſtars!—a brothel! — Heaven forbid!

Eutracia. My friend tells you true, indeed: ſhe is the lawful wife of that gentleman, they

have been married above ſeven years, I was preſent at their wedding, and that woman there is no better than a proſtitute.

Mrs. Flounceit. Oh, the vile ſlut! I wonder Sir David Townly ſhould offer to bring me into this ſcrape! he knows very well I never countenance ſuch doings. Huſſey, get out of my houſe this minute.

In ſpeaking this, ſhe advanced towards the miſtreſs of Meroveus, and was about to puſh her out of the room; but that gentleman, perceiving her intent, ſtepp'd between, and with a viſage all inflam'd with wrath, ſaid, 'Hold, madam, hold; — 'this lady has put herſelf under my protection, and 'I will take care to defend her from all inſults 'whatſoever.' Then turning to Deidamia went on thus:—'As for you, madam, you have only 'expoſed me, and undone yourſelf: I will never 'ſee you more.' He then took his trembling miſ-'treſs by the hand to lead her down ſtairs; Deidamia, in the utmoſt agony of ſpirit, follow'd, and catching him by the arm, cry'd out to him,—'Oh 'ſtay, Meroveus! — you will not ſure, add injury 'to injury! — ſtay, I conjure you, and let that 'woman go!' To which he reply'd, 'Stand off, 'madam, — your touch is now more hateful to 'me than ever it was agreeable, ſo I leave you to 'repent the cauſe.'

This cruel rebuff not making her let go the hold ſhe had taken of him, he threw her off with the greateſt contempt, and in an inſtant was out of the houſe with his diſſolute companion, who was, doubtleſs, as haſty as himſelf to get from a place where ſhe could expect nothing but affronts. Deidamia would have purſued her ungenerous huſband, perhaps even into the ſtreet, had ſhe not been withheld by Eutracia, who endeavoured to convince

vince her how little it would avail to remonſtrate any thing to him while he continued in this humour.

Rage had 'till now kept up the ſpirits of this unhappy lady; but the objects of it being removed, and the power of reflecting return'd, ſhe ſunk into a grief no leſs immoderate;—ſhe wept, ſhe wrung her hands, beat her lovely breaſt, ſhe ſwoon'd ſeveral times, and in her intervals of ſenſe could only cry out, — 'Cruel, barbarous Meroveus! — Unfaithful, ungenerous huſband! — Good Heaven! for what unknown tranſgreſſion am I become thus miſerable!' Neither Eutracia nor Mrs. Flounceit omitted any thing in their power which they thought might ſerve to give her conſolation; but all they could do was inſufficient, and it was ſome hours before ſhe was enough recover'd even to be carried home: as ſoon as ſhe was, Eutracia went with her in the coach, and I walk'd home, touch'd to the very ſoul at the ſight of her diſtreſs.

I have already given the reader my opinion concerning the extreme folly of revealing unwelcome ſecrets to our friends, ſo ſhall forbear adding any farther reflections on that head, and proceed, with as much brevity as the ſtory will admit, to the cataſtrophe of this unhappy adventure.

I went the next morning to the houſe of Meroveus, and was convinced, by what I heard the ſervants ſay among themſelves, that he had not been at home that night, which, indeed, I feared would be the caſe. On my going up ſtairs, I found Deidamia lying on a couch, in a very dejected melancholy poſture; Eutracia was ſitting near her, that lady, it ſeems, having never quitted her ſince the unfortunate viſit they made together at Mrs. Flounceit's; but as the diſcourſe between

them conſiſted only of complaints on the one ſide, and perſuaſions to moderation on the other, I think it not material enough to be inſerted. I had not been in the room above a quarter of an hour, before a ſervant preſented a letter to Deidamia; it was from her husband, and contain'd theſe lines:

'MADAM,

'I AM determin'd to live eaſy, which I am 'certain is utterly impracticable for me to do with 'you, after what paſs'd yeſterday between us. 'What I then ſaid in heat of paſſion, I now repeat 'in cool blood, and that, on the moſt mature delibe-'ration. In ſhort, an eternal diſunion muſt be the 'conſequence of your behaviour, nor ſhould the 'tongues of angels diſſwade me from this reſolu-'tion; you will do well to bear it with patience, 'as the misfortune, if it may be one, has happen'd 'entirely through your own fault.'

'To leave you no juſt reaſon to complain, I 'ſhall order the jointure, ſettled on you by our 'marriage-articles, to be regularly paid to you as 'though I were no more; and ſhall reſign to you 'all the plate, linnen, and houſhold furniture, ex-'cepting only my books, the India cheſt, and 'buroe in my dreſſing-room.

'As to our children,—the boy I ſhall take un-'der my care, the girl I leave to yours, and ſhall 'alſo add one hundred pounds per annum to the 'above mention'd jointure, for the maintenance 'and education.

'Farewel for ever! As we no more muſt meet 'in love, it will be highly improper, and I think 'could not be very agreeable to either of us, to 'meet at all; I ſhall therefore refrain, as much as 'poſſible, going to any of thoſe places you are ac-'cuſtom'd to frequent, and hope you will have 'prudencce enough to fix the ſame precaution in

'avoiding

'avoiding me, eſpecially when I tell you, that it is 'the only thing in which you can now oblige

'Your ill-treated husband,

'MEROVEUS.'

'P.S. I ſhall ſend to-morrow for the things I 'mention'd.'

My fair readers will be the beſt judges of what Deidamia felt on finding her husband had taken a reſolution which could not but give the moſt mortal ſtab both to her love and pride. She paus'd a little after having read it, then gave it to Eutracia, crying out at the ſame time with the greateſt emphaſis: 'See there, my dear Eutracia, this wedded 'husband is the ſole aggreſſor, yet pretends to be 'the perſon who has reaſon to reſent!' — That young lady, who was all fire and ſpirit, could not forbear loading Meroveus with reproaches at the end of every paragraph ſhe read; and when ſhe had finiſh'd, ſaid to Deidamia,

Eutracia. And how, my dear, do you intend to proceed with this baſe, this moſt injurious man!

Deidamia. Indeed I know not.

Eutracia. If I were in your place, I would write him ſuch an anſwer as would make his ears tingle.

Deidamia. Alas, you know not what it is to be a wife!—but I will write, however.

She then rung her bell for the footman, and aſk'd him whether the perſon who brought the letter waited for an anſwer.

Footman. No, madam, he only bid me deliver it into your own hands, and told me my maſter order'd me to come to him about two hours hence at George's coffee-houſe, and bring ſome linnen with me.

Deidamia. 'Tis very well; but do not go 'till I have ſpoke to you again: I have a meſſage to ſend by you.

The fellow aſſured her he would not fail to obey her commands, and withdrew; after which ſhe ſat down to her eſcrutore, took pen and paper, and began to write in the following terms:

'Cruel and unjuſt, yet ſtill dear MEROVEUS!

'IF there needed any other proof than that 'ſhameful one I yeſterday was witneſs of, that I am 'miſerable in the total loſs of your affection, the 'letter I have juſt now received would be a con-'vincing one.—What, — after ſeven years conju-'gal tenderneſs, perfect and ſincere on my ſide, 'and well diſſembled on yours, can you enter-'tain a thought of parting!—Of tearing a family 'to pieces, which has hitherto lived ſo reſpect-'able in the world!——Muſt I be doom'd to 'mourn a husband's loſs even when that husband 'lives! —Muſt my ſon be bred an alien to his 'mother, and my daughter a ſtranger to her fa-'ther! — O think, Meroveus! and if no conſi-'deration of me has any weight, let that of your 'own reputation, and the intereſt of our children, 'prevail on you to alter this cruel reſolution!— 'We may, at leaſt, live civilly together, if not 'with the ſame fondneſs as before this accident.— 'Yet why ſhould we not! — I am willing to meet 'you more than half way in love.—You cannot 'deny but you have wrong'd me in the moſt ten-'der point: I confeſs I was too raſh in the manner 'of detecting you: — we both have been to 'blame; — what is done cannot be recall'd;— 'but it may be repented of; — let us exchange 'forgiveneſs, and endeavour to forget what is 'paſt.

'There

'There was a time when every little ailment 'felt by your Deidamia gave equal pain to you!— 'Oh, can you then throw off at once all pity, all 'humanity, all remorſe, for the agonies you cannot 'but be ſenſible my poor tormented heart now 'labours under!—No,—'tis impoſſible,—reaſon, 'honour, and good-nature forbid it!—you will re- 'turn, accept the pardon I ſhall with joy beſtow; 'and, in return, vouchſafe me yours.—Let not 'my hopes deceive me;—I am ſure they will not, 'if you will ſuffer yourſelf to reflect ſeriouſly on 'the unhappy conſequences that muſt infallibly 'attend a ſeparation from her, who ever has been, 'and deſires to continue,

'With the greateſt ſincerity,

'Your moſt faithful, and

'Moſt affectionate wife,

'DEIDAMIA.'

This ſhe communicated to Eutracia, who approved of the former part of it, but highly condemn'd the latter, as thinking it too ſubmiſſive. Deidamia, however, was of a different opinion, and the footman coming in ſoon after to know her commands, ſhe ſeal'd it up and put it into his hands to deliver to his maſter, bidding him ſay withal that ſhe was very much indiſpoſed.

After he was gone, the ladies began to enter into ſome diſpute concerning the authority of a husband, and the duty that was expected from a wife; but as I could promiſe myſelf no farther information by their diſcourſe on this ſubject, and beſides, remembering I had ſome buſineſs of my own to diſpatch, I left the place that inſtant, not without an intention to return thither the next day. Accordingly I went in the morning, and found poor Dei-

damia almoſt drown'd in tears, and walking backwards and forwards in one of her rooms in a diſtracted poſture; the cauſe of theſe freſh agonies I eaſily perceived by a letter which lay open on the table; — the contents whereof were as follow:

'MADAM,

'I HAVE have been in ſome debate within my 'mind, whether to anſwer your epiſtle in the manner I now do, or not to anſwer it at all, would 'be the moſt effectual means to prevent your 'giving me or yourſelf any future trouble; you 'find I have purſued the former of theſe methods, 'and hope you will have diſcretion enough not 'to involve me in a ſecond dilemma on this 'ſcore. Be aſſured, I did not reſolve on a final 'ſeparation without having well weigh'd the conſequences attending it, and find them ſuch as can 'no way come in competition with my peace of 'mind, without which life would be a curſe, my 'bed a bed of thorns, my table a deſart, my houſe 'a hell, and every friend that came to viſit, a fury, to torment me.

'See the reverſe your jealous folly has occaſion'd; tax me not, therefore, with ingratitude; 'a thouſand times you have confeſs'd you thought 'yourſelf as happy as a woman could be, and it is 'certain you were truly ſo. During the whole courſe 'of the years we lived together, you never had 'the leaſt ſhadow of a cauſe to complain of my 'want either of reſpect or tenderneſs: if I indulged any pleaſures, which I imagined would 'give you diſquiet, I took care to be very private 'in them; — Why then did you ſuffer yourſelf to 'be led by an idle curioſity to pry into ſecrets 'which the diſcovery of muſt give you pain, and

'poſſibly

'poſſibly prove the total deſtruction of that love 'which once you call'd your greateſt bleſſing?

'It is doubtleſs beſt for both of us, as you 'rightly enough obſerve, to forget what is paſt; 'but am far from thinking it can be done by the 'way you mean: — no, to forget can only be ac-'compliſhed by avoiding each other's preſence, and 'ceaſing all kind of communication between us. 'I ſhall therefore give orders to my ſervant to 'charge himſelf with no letter or meſſage you may 'think fit to ſend, and deſire you will aſſure your-'ſelf that this is the very laſt you ever ſhall re-'ceive from me. Farewel, I wiſh you all happi-'neſs in any other ſphere of life than that you 'lately lived in with

'MEROVEUS.'

After having examined this epiſtle, I liſtened to what paſs'd between Eutracia and Deidamia; but tho' I ſtaid till my Tablets were crowded, I ſhall forbear inſerting the particulars of theſe ladies diſcourſe, for reaſons which will be hereafter explained; and only ſay in general, that Eutracia would fain have ſpirited up her friend to reſentment and diſdain againſt a huſband whom ſhe thought ſo unworthy of her; that Deidamia's love overcame her ſex's pride; and in fine, that the one argued like a virgin, and the other like an affectionate wife. Whether Deidamia made any further attempts to move her obdurate huſband to a reconciliation I cannot be poſitive; but believe ſhe did not, for ſhe retired ſoon after into the country, whence ſhe is but lately returned; and whatever her heart may endure, has very much regained her uſual compoſure of countenance and behaviour.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Is ſomewhat more conciſe than ordinary, but to the purpoſe, and will be found not the leaſt worthy of any in the book of being regarded with attention.

AS during the courſe of theſe lucubrations I have been extremely circumſtantial in the reports I have made, the reader has a right to be ſurpriſed that I omitted the diſcourſe between Deidamia and Eutracia; I ſhall therefore, according to my promiſe, relate my motive for ſo doing, and flatter myſelf it is ſuch as will render me perfectly excuſable in this point. Much about the time of the adventure related in the two preceding chapters, I happened to be witneſs of a converſation, which, though between different perſons, and on a very different occaſion, was ſtill on the ſubject of marriage, the authority of a huſband, and the ſubmiſſion expected from a wife; I left out the former, and made choice of the latter, as of the two the moſt intereſting.

Two ſiſters, whoſe characters I preſent to the public under the names of Flavia and Celemena, have both of them a tolerable ſhare of beauty, but no other qualification, either natural or acquired, that could entitle them to the hope of an elevated ſtation; yet, by the benevolent aſpect of their happy planets, are they become the brides of Alcandor and Thelamont, perſons diſtinguiſhed in the world by their birth and fortune, and ſtill more ſo by the greatneſs of their merit. Theſe nuptials, ſo aſtoniſhing to the town, and which happened ſoon after one another, gave me a curioſity to diſcover, by the help of my Inviſibility, in what faſhion the ladies would behave themſelves in a

ſphere

ſphere of life ſo altogether new to them, and ſo little expected, even in their vaineſt wiſhes, ever to arrive at.

Flavia was the eldeſt, and it was to her I made my firſt viſit; ſhe was in her dreſſing-room, ſitting at her toylet, with her waiting-maid behind her, giving the finiſhing ſtroke to her head tyre. Thelamont was alſo there, and ſtood leaning his elbow on a buroe, with a good deal of diſſatisfaction in his countenance, while ſhe kept looking in the glaſs, and without turning her head towards him, ſaid,

Flavia. Prithee, Thelamont, let us talk no more of this ſtuff, I am quite ſick of it; I am certainly the beſt judge of theſe things, and it is in vain to perſuade me, for I will not be contradicted.

Thelamont. You will not then oblige me?

Flavia. Poſitively no; not when you intermeddle in theſe affairs.

Thelamont. Well then, madam, I ſhall ſay no more; but muſt tell you that I thought I had a right to expect this proof of your complaiſance.

With theſe words ſhe flung out of the room, and ſhe ſaid to herſelf.

Flavia. Piſh; was there ever any thing ſo teaſing! Men are mighty fooliſh ſometimes. Katherine, bring me my gauze handkerchief.

Maid. Oh, ma'am, did not your ladyſhip ſay you would wear your new tippet to-day?

Flavia. Hah. — Yes, — no, — it will ſhew too much of my neck.

Maid. Oh, ma'am, your ladyſhip cannot ſhew too much of ſo beautiful a part.

Flavia. That's true; but I ſcratched one of my breaſts with a pin this morning.

Maid. Oh the ugly pin, I — wiſh I knew which it was, that I might crook it quite double and throw it into the fire.

Juſt

Juſt as the maid had expreſs'd her reſentment againſt the weapon that had wounded her miſtreſs, Celemena came into the room; and after ſaluting her ſiſter with a freedom ſuitable to the nearneſs of their blood and friendſhip, ſaid to her,

Celemena. What is the matter, my dear ſiſter? you do not look pleas'd to-day.

Flavia. Umph. — No, not very well pleas'd; nor, indeed, much diſpleas'd.

Celemena. I met Thelamont going out as I came in, I thought he ſeemed more reſerved than uſual, and in a very ill humour.

Flavia. If he chuſes to be ſo, it would be a pity any one ſhould attempt to put him out of it.

Celemena. I hope no miſunderſtanding has happened between you.

Flavia. No, no, we underſtand one another pretty well; I underſtand that he would fain pretend to take upon him the government of my actions, and he underſtands that I will not let him do it; ſo we have exchanged a few words this morning, that's all.

Celemena. Have a care, ſiſter, quarrels in the beginning of marriage promiſe but little felicity in the continuance of that ſtate.

Flavia. That's true; but 'tis very provoking when a man will needs interfere in things he has no manner of concern with.

Celemena. Pray what is the ſubject of your diſpute, if it be not too great a ſecret?

Flavia. Why you muſt know he wants me to leave off putting any carmine upon my cheeks, calls it naſty daubing, and ſays I ſhould be a thouſand times handſomer without it.

Celemena. I can ſee nothing extraordinary in this; there are many men who have an utter averſion to a woman's uſing any art to her complexion.

Flavia.

Flavia. They may cry out againſt it; but yet I am ſure it is frequently owing to art that they fall ſo much in love with us; a little red upon the cheeks gives a ſparkle to the eyes, and a luſtre to the features, whlch otherwiſe would appear flat and languid; but they are ſo fooliſh as not to conſider this; they like us as they ſee us altogther, and though they may be ſenſible we are painted, never once imagine it is to that neceſſary auxiliary to beauty that we are chiefly indebted for thoſe charms which attract their admiration.

Celemena. Suppoſe it as you ſay, which however I am far from allowing to be always the caſe. Thelamont has now ſeen you ſuch as nature made you, the night wears off that borrow'd luſtre, and the morning ſhews you what you truly are; and if he approves of you in this light, I know of no other perſon whom you need be ſtudious to pleaſe.

Flavia. I am of a quite different opinion. Oh the joy of being gazed at, and followed by a whole crowded Mall!

Celemena. Perhaps to laugh; but if ſincere, a very empty joy, and what a married woman ought not to be too ambitious of.

Flavia. So then you would have me comply with my huſband's requeſt?

Celemena. Indeed I would adviſe you to it: I am ſure if Alcandor expreſs'd a deſire that I ſhould cut off my hair, and never let it grow again, tho' it is the gift of nature, and beſtow'd upon me as the greateſt ornament of our ſex, I would not heſitate one moment to oblige him.

Flavia. Then you are a fool.

Celemena. In this point I do not think I am: for beſides that duty which the law exacts from every wife to her huſband, there are other reaſons which would oblige me to refuſe nothing to Alcandor.

She

She accompany'd theſe words with a very ſignifi-cant look, which Flavia obſerving, ordered her maid, which had been all this time in the room, to withdraw; and, as ſoon as ſhe was gone, replyed to whas her ſiſter had ſaid in theſe terms:

Flavia. I know not what you would ſay; you would infer, that becauſe Alcandor and Thelamont married us without fortunes, we are therefore bound to be their ſlaves.

Celemena. Not ſo, and I dare believe that neither of them will ever require any ſubmiſſion from us, but ſuch, as if we had always been their equals, would very well become us to grant.

Flavia. Laird! what a buſtle you make about equals! Whatever we were before, marriage has made us now their equals; and for my own part, I ſhall never ſubmit to do any thing Thelamont requires of me, unleſs my own inclination happens to concur.

Celemena. Oh, ſiſter, I am amaz'd to hear you talk in this manner!—Have you been married but one month, and can already forget the unhappineſs of our ſingle ſtate —our ſcanty and precarious dependance, — the difficulties we found to ſupply ourſelves with even the common neceſſaries of life! We made, indeed, a kind of tawdry ſhew when we appeared abroad; but how did we pinch for it at home? Is there no love, no gratitude due from us to men who have raiſed us to opulence, grandeur and reſpect!

Flavia. Piſh; they married us to pleaſe themſelves, not out of pity to us. But let us have no more of this dull ſtuff; you muſt go with me to Mrs. Rakelove's route to night, it is the firſt ſhe has had, and I promis'd her to bring all the company I could.

Celemena. Indeed you muſt excuſe me.

Flavia. For what reaſon?

Celemena.

Celemena. Alcandor ſups at home, and I cannot be abroad.

Flavia. Heavens! how ſtrangely ſilly you are grown! Alcandor ſups at home. What then, he did not marry you to make you a cook! You do not dreſs his victuals!

Celemena. No, but he married me to make me a companion at his victuals; and while he continues to deſire my preſence, as I flatter myſelf he always will, I ſhall never form any pretences to be abſent.

The face of Flavia grew more red than the carmine had made it, on finding in her ſiſter ſentiments ſo oppoſite to her own; but was prevented from making any anſwer by the entrance of a ſervant, who told her that ſome ladies were come to viſit her; on which ſhe went, accompanied by Celemena into the dining-room, in order to receive them. Thus ended the converſation I mentioned, and by it the reader may judge which of theſe two ſiſters had the greateſt ſhare of prudence, beſt deſerved her good fortune, and was moſt likely to enjoy a long continuance of it.

CHAP. VII.

Preſents the account of an incident which cannot but be deeply affecting to the youth of both ſexes, and no leſs remarkable in its event than any the Author's Inviſibilityſhip ever enabled him to diſcover.

AMONG all the various deceptions which are carried on in this great world, I know of none more cruel, and more liable to be attended with the worſt of conſequences, than thoſe practiſed in the affairs of love; yet it is a crime which paſſes

paſſes with impunity, and is ſcarce cenſured by any but the perſons injured by it, and their particular friends and confidants. Even the ladies, generally ſpeaking, for there is no rule without exceptions, are ſo little the friends of each other, that we rarely find them taking up the quarrel of their ſex in this point; on the contrary, they are apt to abſolve the vow breaker, and let the whole blame fall on the believer: a man who has triumph'd over the credulity of an hundred women, ſees himſelf not leſs reſpected; and ſometimes the number of paſt conqueſts ſhall ſerve him as a recommendation, and be a means of his attaining new ones. Perjury is deemed but a venal tranſgreſſion in this caſe; few think that oaths and imprecations, when dictated by the heart of an amorous inclination, tho' formed in the moſt binding terms, and utter'd in the moſt ſolemn manner, are ever regiſtered in Heaven.

This vice, as I muſt take the liberty to call it, is not however wholly confined to the male ſex; I am ſorry to obſerve that thoſe of the other, either through pride, vanity, or an inconſtancy of nature, are ſometimes found guilty of deluding their lovers with fallacious expectations. I hope alſo to be forgiven by the more diſcreet part of womankind, when I ſay that a propenſity to ſuch a behaviour is yet leſs excuſeable in them than the men, as a perfect innocence, a ſweetneſs of diſpoſition, and a ſimplicity of manners, are, or ought to be, the diſtinguiſhing characteriſtics of the fair ſex.

A young lady, to whom I ſhall give the name of Syrenia, was endowed by nature with every requiſite to command love and admiration; ſhe had fine eyes, a regular ſet of features, fine hair, and a moſt delicate complexion; was tall, well-ſhaped, and had ſomewhat peculiarly attractive in her air. Fortune had not been altogether ſo propitious to her;

her; through the extravagancies of her parents, ſhe was left in poſſeſſion of a very moderate fortune; it was, however, entirely at her own diſpoſal, and ſufficient, with the good œconomy ſhe was miſtreſs of, to ſupport her in a very genteel, though not a grand way of life.

Propoſals of marriage had often been made to her by ſeveral eminent and wealthy citizens; but ſhe rejected them all, and deſpiſed the thoughts not only of a ſhop, but alſo of all other callings and occupations whatever; ambition was the predominant paſſion of her ſoul, and ſhe had vanity enough to think that her birth, her perſon and accompliſhments were ſuch as might very well compenſate for the ſmallneſs of her fortune, and entitle her to higher expectations.

She had lived 'till the age of twenty-three, without having any offer of the kind ſhe hoped; but about the expiration of that æra, a young gentleman, call'd Roſſano, happening to ſee her at the houſe of a relation whom he viſited, became violently in love with her, and ſoon after finding means to get himſelf introduced, made a declaration of his paſſion; to which, knowing what and who he was, ſhe gave all the encouragement he could wiſh, or that was befitting the character of a modeſt woman. It would, indeed, have been much to be wondered at, if the addreſſes of Roſſano had not been acceptable to her; he is deſcended from a very ancient and worthy family, has an eſtate of eight hundred pounds per annum, entirely free from any incumbrance, either mortgage, dowry, or portions to be paid out of it; his perſon and behaviour are extremely agreeable; and, to add to all this, has deſervedly the reputation of a man of ſtrict honour, and more ſobriety than could be expected from his years, and the diſſoluteneſs of the preſent ti-

The ſincerity and warmth of his affection making him very ſtrenuous in his preſſures, and the advantages ſhe found in a match with him rendering her complying, they were beginning to talk of ordering articles for their marriage to be drawn up, when an unexpected accident, relating to his eſtate, obliged him to go immediately into the country. Though he propoſed to ſtay but a ſhort time, yet he could not think of being deprived of the ſight of his beloved Syrenia, even for a few weeks, without an infinity of grief. She teſtified little leſs regret for this enforced ſeparation; their parting was extremely moving, each ſeemed to endeavour to outvie the other in expreſſions of tenderneſs; and the only conſolation he had was, the repeated aſſurances ſhe gave him, that wherever ſhe went he carried her heart along with him.

It is highly probable, that the affection ſhe profeſs'd for him was at that time perfectly ſincere, and that ſhe looked upon the accident which delay'd the celebration of their nuptials as no inconſiderable misfortune to her; but whatever chagrin ſhe might feel at firſt on this account, it was very ſoon diſſipated, and gave way to ideas of a far different nature. The motive which brought about ſo ſudden, and ſo extraordinary a change in her ſentiments, I ſhall relate, as I was afterwards fully informed of it, by the ſeveral converſations I was preſent at by the help of my Inviſibility.

She was one morning in the Park with a lady of her acquaintance call'd Delia, where they were met and joined by a young officer, brother to Delia, and a gentleman who was with him, and equally a ſtranger to both the ladies, but behaved towards them with the greateſt reſpect and politeneſs. They walk'd two or three turns up and down the Mall, after which the gentlemen took their leave, and Syrenia and Delia went to their reſpective

tive habitations, without thinking any more of what had paſs'd. Little, indeed, could either of them apprehend the conſequences of this adventure; but the next day, early in the forenoon, Syrenia was ſurpriſed with a viſit from Delia, who came running into her apartment without any ceremony, crying out as ſhe entered,

Delia. Joy to you, my dear; I come to wiſh you joy!

Syrenia. Of what! for I ſee no other ſubject of joy than what I always feel on ſeeing you.

Delia. Me! — no, no, — a thouſand ſuch as me are quite out of the queſtion; but I have the pleaſure to congratulate you on the greateſt conqueſt your beauty ever made, or perhaps ever can make!

Syrenia. You are got into a vein of raillery this morning.

Delia. No, upon my honour, I never was more ſerious. Do you not remember the fine gentleman that was with my brother yeſterday in the Mall?

Syrenia. Yes; you know they join'd company with us.

Delia. His name is Leontine; he is the eldeſt ſon of his father, and heir apparent to three thouſand pounds a year: — you ſaw his perſon; for my part, I think nothing can be more agreeable; and my brother tells me he is the moſt accompliſhed man he ever knew.

Syrenia. Well, and what is all this to me?

Delia. It is all to you. It ſeems he ſaw you laſt Sunday at Weſtminſter-Abbey, fell violently in love with you, and would have followed to have ſeen where you lived, but was prevented by ſome gentlemen of his acquaintance, who that inſtant laid hold of him, and forced him along with them.

Syrenia. 'Tis poſſible ſuch a one might be there; but I did not take notice of him.

Delia

Delia. That may be, but he took ſo much of you as not to be able to ſleep ever ſince.

Syrenia. Very romantic, truly. But pray how came you ſo well acquainted with the ſecrets of his heart, who yeſterday ſeemed an utter ſtranger to his perſon.

Delia. I will tell you the whole affair, as my brother laſt night came and inform'd me of it. After they had left us they went and dined together at a tavern: Leontine aſked a thouſand queſtions concerning your family, your fortune, and your character; all which, you may be ſure, were anſwered not to your diſadvantage: he then made my brother the confidante of the paſſion you had inſpired him with, and intreated him to uſe his intereſt with me, as he found I was pretty intimate with you, to engage me to introduce him to you, which I have faithfully promiſed to do.

Syrenia. What! without my conſent?

Delia. I hoped to be forgiven; ſuch an offer; my dear, is not to be rejected.

Syrenia. It is much beyond my expectations, I muſt confeſs; but the diſparity between our fortunes is too great.

Delia. If he thinks yonr perſon an equivalent, it is not your buſineſs to make objections.

Syrenia. That is true; and if I could flatter myſelf he were really ſincere; — but I will conſider on it.

Delia. It will be time enough for you to conſider when you have heard what he has to ſay; for I have promiſed to bring you together this evening.

Syrenia. This evening! — as how?

Delia. As thus: I invite you to ſup with me to-night, my brother and Leontine ſhall come in as if by accident; neither your pride nor your modeſty has any thing to ſcruple; for I aſſure you I will

will not let even my brother know that I have previouſly acquainted you with any thing of the matter.

Syrenia. Well, on that condition I will come.

Delia. Indeed, my dear, I ſhould think you very much to blame to turn your back on a proſpect ſo highly advantageous; for though you are well born, well accompliſh'd, are handſome, and have for ſome fortune of your own, yet the three firſt of theſe, as men now think of marriage, weigh but lightly againſt what they call the incumbrance of a wife; and as to the latter, you know, it will not entitle you to a coach and ſix.

Syrenia. The juſtice of what you ſay cannot be denied; but I would do nothing that ſhould occaſion my character being call'd in queſtion, nor would ſeem too forward, though to promote the higheſt expectations; therefore, my dear Delia, remember I depend on your prudence.

Delia. In this you ſafely may: I know too well what is owing to my ſex, and the cruel aſperſions men are apt to throw on our moſt innocent freedoms, not to be extremely cautious in avoiding giving the leaſt room for cenſure.

Syrenia. Indeed, my dear, my obſervation on your own conduct ought to put to ſilence all my doubts on that ſcore; and whatever is the event of this affair, I ſhall always gratefully acknowledge your good wiſhes towards me.

Delia. If it ſucceeds, I ſhall be a ſharer in your good fortune, as nothing gives me a more ſenſible ſatisfaction, than to have it in my power to contribute to the happineſs of my friends; but I muſt leave you, I promiſed to let my brother know whether you could come or not, that he may appriſe Leontine of it.

The good natur'd Delia, who did not know how far Syrenia had gone with Roſſano, went away in

ſpeaking theſe words; but I could eaſily perceive, by the glow on Syrenia's cheeks, how much ſhe was tranſported with the purpoſe of her viſit; and was yet more confirm'd of her being ſo by ſome diſjointed ſoliloquies ſhe utter'd when ſhe thought there was no witneſs of what ſhe ſaid. 'Three 'thouſand pounds a year, and ſo fine a gentleman 'as Leontine! ſo handſome, ſo polite, ſo every 'thing that is agreeable! If he is as ſincere as Delia 'imagines him to be, I ſhall have cauſe to bleſs the 'hour I went to Weſtminſter-Abbey; or rather, 'that which carried me to the Park yeſterday, 'without which he might never have known who 'I was, or where to find me, and ſhould have loſt 'all the advantage my good ſtars ſeem'd to have 'decreed for me.'

Here ſhe ceas'd to ſpeak, other ſort of emotions riſing in her mind, to which ſhe gave a looſe in this exclamation: 'It was an unlucky thing I went ſo 'far with Roſſano, the poor man loves me to diſ-'traction, he will certainly break his heart when 'he finds I have forſaken him; and, it may be, 'reproach me as the occaſion of his death.'

On this her countenance ſeem'd a little diſcon-certed; but it ſoon wore off, and after a ſhort pauſe went on thus: 'I am glad, however, that no 'contract has paſſed between us: the encourage-'ment I gave his paſſion, and the verbal promiſes 'I made him, need be no impediment to my ac-'cepting a better offer. It will be prudence in me, 'however, not to throw him off, nor give him any 'room to ſuſpect I have leſs affection for him than 'I had, 'till I am well aſſured that Leontine is in 'earneſt.'

This was enough to ſhew me the principle and diſpoſition of Syrenia, both which, indeed, were ſo little pleaſing to me, that I had not patience to ſtay with her any longer, but quitted her apart-

ment

ment with a contempt, which could ſhe have been ſenſible of, would no doubt have given her ſome mortification.

I made one of the company that night at Delia's however; but as it could not be expected, that in a meeting which was to paſs for caſual, there ſhould be any converſation, except on general topics, I reap'd no other benefit by being preſent, than to be convinced that Leontine, by the glances he took every opportunity of caſting at Syrenia, was indeed very much enamour'd, and that ſhe ſpared no pains to make him more ſo. The next day he went with the brother of Delia to viſit her, and the ſucceeding one took the liberty of going thither alone, and made a declaration of his paſſion, which ſhe, having well prepared herſelf with anſwers, receiv'd in ſuch a manner as neither to reject, nor with too much readineſs encourage.

The ice once broke, he proſecuted his addreſſes with ſo much vigour and aſſiduity, that ſhe thought it would be no breach of modeſty to give him room to hope he was not altogether indifferent to her; by degrees, therefore, ſhe became more kind on every viſit he made, but did it with caution and reſerve, neither by her looks or words forfeiting that character of diſcretion ſhe ſo much valued herſelf upon, dropping only ſome hints, as if forced from her, from a fund of tenderneſs within, which ſhe would fain endeavour to conceal, but had not the power of doing it. Thus artful in appearing artleſs, Leontine, though a man of very good ſenſe and penetration, never once ſuſpected ſhe was any other than ſuch as ſhe affected to be plain, ſimple, generous, and incapable of diſguiſing her ſentiments.

It is certain, indeed, that her natural cunning was greatly aſſiſted how to proceed on this occaſion, by the intelligence ſhe daily received from

Delia, to whoſe brother Leontine made no ſcruple of diſburthening all that paſs'd in his heart in relation to his paſſion for Syrenia. From this faithful friend ſhe learn'd, that tho' it was not to be doubted but that Leontine was as much in love with her as man could be, yet the great reſpect and reverence he had for his father would not permit him to think of venturing on a thing of ſo much conſequence as marriage, without having firſt obtained his conſent, and approbation of the woman he made choice of for a wife; and that to this end he had already ſent two letters to his father, who lived entirely in the country; but the anſwers he received not being quite ſatisfactory as he wiſh'd, he had wrote a third, dictated in the moſt paſſionate and preſſing terms.

She could not avoid being under ſome very uneaſy apprehenſions on the ſcore of this old gentleman, and alſo feared that the paſſion Leontine was inſpired with might not of itſelf be ſtrong enough to get the better of that obedience owing from him to a father's will; ſhe therefore wiſh'd to intereſt his good-nature and generoſity in her favour, and judged that the ſureſt way to ſecure his affection was to make him the confidante of her's. But the means of accompliſhing this was a difficulty ſhe knew not preſently how to get over. To confeſs by word of mouth ſhe loved him, ſeem'd too great a breach of modeſty, eſpecially as his courtſhip to her had not yet been of any long continuance; and to get him inform'd of it by Delia, ſhe thought would be the ſame thing, as he would doubtleſs imagine it was not done without her privity and conſent; beſides, ſhe knew not whether that lady would approve of ſuch a ſtep. Being one day deſired by him to favour him with a tune on her ſpinnet, ſhe entertain'd him with an air out of the Opera of Ariſnoe, the firſt in the Italian taſte ever exhibited

exhibited on the Engliſh ſtage, and, in my opinion, has been exceeded by none that have come after it. The words ſhe ſung to her inſtrument were theſe;

Wanton zephirs ſoftly blowing,
Watching, catching, whiſpering, going,
Bear in ſighs my ſoul away:
Tell Ormondo what I feel,
Tell him how his chains I wear,
Tell him all my grief and care;
Gently ſtealing,
And revealing,
More of love than I can ſay.

But though Leontine extoll'd both the muſic and the voice which gave it utterance, yet he ſhew'd no indication of imaginining ſhe had any deſign of flattering his paſſion in the choice ſhe made of this ſong: this making her perceive ſhe muſt be more explicit, her fertile invention ſoon preſented her with a ſtratagem, which pleaſing her fancy at the ſame time that it promis'd the ſucceſs ſhe aim'd at, ſhe put into immediate execution. It was this: Having a natural talent for poetry, ſhe ſat down at her eſcrutore, took pen, ink and paper, and without being at the pains of much ſtudy, wrote the following lines:

The breathings of a love-ſick heart.

Wit, manly beauty, every grace combine,
To deck the youth I love with charms divine.
But, ah! my too uncautious heart take heed,
Nor with gay hopes the growing paſſion feed;
Wealth's the chief idol that mankind adore,
The ſov'reign power they all fall down before;
My niggard fortune does that charm deny,
And love alone will not its wants ſupply;
Let me then guard each av'nue to my breaſt,
And bar all entrance to this dangerous gueſt;

Leſt by indulging the preſumptuous flame,
I fall the victim of deſpair and ſhame.
But, oh, 'tis vain!—the god of love conſpires,
To aid my Leontine with all his fires,
Speaks in his voice and ſparkles in his eyes,
And what he ſweetly forces, juſtifies.
'Tis ſure determin'd in the book of fate,
I muſt adore, e'vn tho' he proves ungrate.

This paper, which ſhe wanted him to believe was a ſincere confeſſion of the whole ſecret of her ſoul, ſhe contrived ſhould fall into his hands in ſuch a manner as ſhould have too much the appearance of chance to be liable to any ſuſpicion of deſign. At his next viſit, her maid being well inſtructed by her how to act, ran haſtily into the room, and told her that the man whom ſhe had ordered to come for his money was below. Syrenia affected not to underſtand what ſhe meant, and cry'd,

Syrenia. What man? what money?

Maid. Mr. Shapely, madam, your ſtay-maker.

Syrenia. Oh, now I remember I did bid him come for his money; he takes a ſtrange unſeaſonable time; people ſhould always come in a morning on theſe affairs: however, I'll ſee if I can find his bill, and do you carry a pen and ink into the parlour, that he may write me a receipt on the back of it.

On this the maid withdrew, and Syrenia open'd a little deſk that ſtood in the dining-room, and beginning to tumble over ſome writings ſhe had there, as if in ſearch of the pretended bill, dexterouſly ſlipp'd from among the reſt the paper which contain'd the above recited verſes, and let it fall to the ground without ſeeming to obſerve that any thing was dropp'd; then ſaying ſhe had found what ſhe had

had look'd for, ſhut up the deſk in a great hurry, begg'd Leontine would excuſe her abſence for a few moments, and went down ſtairs. She was no ſooner gone than Leontine happening to caſt his eyes that way ſaw the paper, and took it up, as I ſuppoſe, with no other intention than to deliver it to Syrenia when ſhe ſhould return; but it being purpoſely folded in ſuch a manner that part of the writing appeared on the outſide, he muſt have been ſtrangely incurious indeed, if ſeeing it a poem, and wrote in his miſtreſs's hand, he had forebore examining it. Never was any tranſport more viſible than in the countenance of Leontine while reading theſe deluſive ſtanzas: his looks put me in mind of the poet's words:

Kindneſs has reſiſtleſs charms,
All things elſe but faintly warms;
It gilds the lover's ſervile chain,
And makes the ſlave grow pleas'd and vain.

Tho' by the particulars I have been repeating, the reader will eaſily ſuppoſe I was both an eye and an ear witneſs of them, yet it is utterly impoſſible for me to deſcribe either the looks or attitude of the one or the other, in the joyous ſurpriſe of finding himſelf, as he imagined, thus extremely dear to the only woman to whom he wiſh'd to be ſo. She took care to ſtay ſo long below as to give him time to read over, more than once, what ſhe intended for his peruſal: it was ſtill in his hands when ſhe return'd, but ſhe ſeem'd to take no notice of it, and was beginning to apologize for her abſence by laying the blame on the impertinence of her ſtay-maker; but Leontine, with a geſture full of rapture, interrupted her, — ſaying,

Leontine. O, madam, you muſt allow me to become an advocate for this honeſt tradeſman,

ſince by his fortunate detaining you, I am made the happieſt of mankind.

To this Syrenia, affecting not to comprehend the meaning of what he ſaid, reply'd with a ſmile,

Syrenia. What riddle is this you are about to poſe me with? I am the dulleſt creature in the world at giving a ſolution to theſe things.

Leontine. This paper, madam, wafted to me by the god of love's own hand, has given me the wiſh'd-for opportunity of proving myſelf leſs unworthy of the bleſſing I aſpire to, than your doubts ſuggeſt. No, my charming Syrenia, not all the treaſures in the world could add one ray of luſtre to the graces of your mind and perſon, 'tis thoſe alone I covet to enjoy, and in poſſeſſing them ſhall be more rich than in poſſeſſing both the Indies.

While he was ſpeaking, Syrenia caſt her eyes upon the paper and bluſh'd exceſſively; partly perhaps through ſhame, but more through the pleaſure which diffuſed itſelf through all her veins, on perceiving, by the behaviour of Leontine, how well the ſucceſs of her plot had anſwer'd to the intention of it. The well-diſſembled confuſion ſhe was in, was an excuſe for her not ſpeaking, and Leontine went on to aſſure her, in the moſt tender terms, that no conſideration whatever ſhould have the power to oblige him to withdraw that firm affection he now vow'd to her, and that he hop'd a very little time would put a final period to all her apprehenſions on that ſcore. What farther converſation paſs'd between them at this time I ſhall forbear to repeat, as it may be eaſily gueſs'd at; and proceed to the conduct of Syrenia in regard to her other lover, who the reader may think I have too long neglected.

The buſineſs which call'd Roſſano into the country detain'd him there much longer than he had expected, and an unlucky fall from his horſe, the very

very day before he intended to ſet out for London, occaſioned a ſecond delay of his journey. This abſence of his gave Syrenia a full opportunity of entertaining her new lover, tho' ſhe received every poſt a letter from the former, all which ſhe did not fail to anſwer with that tenderneſs which might be expected from a woman who had promiſed to be his wife; ſtill keeping cloſe to her firſt maxim, not to give any umbrage to the one, 'till ſhe was perfectly ſecure of the other. All impediments, however, being at laſt removed, that gentleman arrived in town on the ſame day that Syrenia and Leontine were engaged in the manner above recited: his impatience to ſee his beloved miſtreſs carried him immediately to her lodgings, he came while his rival was with her; but her maid, well knowing how improper it was that they ſhould meet, told him her lady was abroad; on which he went away, ſaying he would return in the evening, as he knew ſhe was not accuſtom'd to ſtay late from home.

He was doubtleſs much diſappointed, but not at all ſuſpicious of the cauſe, 'till having croſs'd the ſtreet he happen'd to caſt his eyes back upon the houſe, either by chance, or poſſibly through fondneſs of the place which contain'd the idol of his wiſhes.—Syrenia was ſitting in the window, and Leontine very near to her: Roſſano had a full view of both; but Syrenia was too earneſt in diſcourſe to obſerve him, though he ſtood motionleſs on the ſpot where he was for ſome minutes. It ſeem'd not ſtrange to him that a gentleman ſhould be with her, tho' he could find no way to account why he ſhould be denied acceſs to her but one, which ſtung him to the ſoul. He was more than once tempted by his jealouſy, as I afterwards diſcover'd, to return and demand of the maid a reaſon for his having been refuſed admittance; but ſecond thoughts prevail'd,

and he went home to deliberate how it would beſt become him to behave in ſuch a circumſtance.

Leontine ſtaid ſupper, and Syrenia ſtepping out of the room to give ſome neceſſary orders to her maid, was inform'd by her that Roſſano had been there, and the meſſage he had left: this greatly diſconcerted her; but after a little pauſe, ſhe recovered herſelf enough to give theſe directions: — 'This is very unlucky, Leontine will probably 'ſtay late; you muſt therefore tell Roſſano that I 'am not yet come home, and that you believe 'I am gone to the play. The maid punctually obeying theſe directions, Roſſano only reply'd, that ſince it happen'd ſo, he would do himſelf the honour to breakfaſt with her lady the next morning, and then departed, ſeemingly well ſatisfied. But though he forebore giving any indications of his jealouſy to this girl, he doubted not but that the ſecond repulſe was owing to the ſame motive the firſt had been: reſolving, however, to be more fully convinced, he poſted his ſervant, whom he had brought with him for that purpoſe, under a lamp a few doors from the houſe where Syrenia lodged, charging him to obſerve carefully who came in or out, and if he ſaw a gentleman in black velvet and a bag wig, to follow him wherever he went, find out his name if poſſible, and bring him an exact account.

Leontine was ſo much charm'd with the diſcovery he had made of Syrenia's affection, that he quitted her apartment not 'till the night was far advanced. Roſſano's ſervant, however, kept cloſe to his ſtand, 'till a chair being call'd, he ſaw the gentleman his maſter had deſcribed go into it: he followed, and as ſoon as Leontine had enter'd the houſe where he lodged, and the door was ſhut, aſk'd the chairmen if they knew the gentleman they had carried; but they anſwering in the negative,

and

and he ſeeing no houſe open where he might enquire, could learn nothing farther that night; but early the next morning he went again, and had the addreſs to find out all the particulars that could be expected from him.

Roſſano was now aſſured not only that he had a rival, but alſo a rival highly favour'd by his miſtreſs. The diſtraction he was in may eaſily be conceived; but he diſſembled it on his firſt approach to Syrenia, whom he did not fail to viſit the next morning, as he had told her maid. Syrenia; before ſhe was inform'd of it, knew very well, that miſſing her that night, he would not let another day paſs over without coming, had the artifice to tell Leontine ſhe was obliged to go ſome few miles out of town to ſee a relation who ſhe heard was dangerouſly ill.

I am not a perſon who live without having ſome buſineſs in the world, yet there are few things of conſequence enough to me to have detain'd me from being a witneſs of what paſs'd in this interview between Roſſano and Syrenia, and ſhall preſent my readers with it as recorded in my faithful Tablets. Syrenia no ſooner heard he was there, than ſhe ran to the top of the ſtair-caſe to receive him, and with the greateſt ſhew of tenderneſs ſaluted him in theſe terms:

Syrenia. My dear Roſſano, how grieved have I been for loſing the ſight of you laſt night, after having been ſo long an age of time deprived of it!

Roſſano. This misfortune, madam, was wholly mine; for while I moan'd your abſence, you doubtleſs found ſomething to amuſe and entertain you. I heard you were at the play.

Syrenia. I was ſo; but what could I find there to compenſate for the ſatisfaction I miſs'd by being ſo unluckily from home!

Roſſano. Were you at Covent-Garden?

Syrenia. No; at Drury-Lane. But why do you aſk?

Roſſano. Only for a fooliſh fancy.

Syrenia. Nay, I may anſwer myſelf that queſtion. I will lay my life you went in ſearch of me; but I choſe to go in a deſhabille, and ſat on the back bench in Burton's box, ſo it was impoſſible for you to ſee me.

Roſſano. Not ſo impoſſible as you imagine, madam: but I had no need to go to either of the Theatres, the object I ſo much languiſhed to behold preſented itſelf to me without my taking any pains.

Theſe words occaſion'd a viſible change in her countenance, ſhe bluſh'd exceſſively, caſt her eyes upon the ground, and had not power to lift them up while ſhe ſaid only,

Syrenia. What is it you mean?

Roſſano. There needs no explanation; the diſorder you in vain endeavour to conceal, ſhews but too much how well you are acquainted with my meaning. Ah, Syrenia, Syrenia, how did I once flatter myſelf with an aſſurance that your heart was mine, inviolably mine; but now I find my abſence has been fatal to me.

Syrenia. Forbear to talk thus: theſe ſuſpicions are unjuſt to me, and cruel to yourſelf.

Roſſano. Why then was I laſt night turn'd from your door! Why twice repulſed, while my more happy rival was allow'd the privilege of entertaining you 'till midnight!

Syrenia. Who tells you this?

Roſſano. My own eyes, madam, were my firſt intelligencers: I ſaw you at that window, ſaw alſo your new favourite, and eaſily judged by both your attitudes what was the ſubject of your converſation; as to the reſt, I was informed of it by means to which I afterwards had recourſe.

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The falſe Syrenia was now abſolutely confounded; there was no giving the lye to ocular demonſtration as to the firſt part of Roſſano's charge againſt her, but ſhe endeavoured to avoid the latter, by ſaying,

Syrenia. Well, ſir, I own I was at home, and had order'd myſelf to be denied; but expected not your coming, or knew you had been here 'till after you were gone: as for the gentleman you ſaw with me, 'tis your own jealous fancy alone that makes you regard him in the light of a lover.

Roſſano. I grant you did not expect me; but as your ſervant is no ſtranger to the footing we are upon, ſhe would certainly have look'd on me as an exception to the general order you had given, if ſhe had not known I was no proper perſon to join in the company you had above: beſides you cannot plead ignorance of my ſecond viſit, yet I was again turn'd back.

Syrenia. You wrong me; I proteſt I never heard of your being here 'till I was going to bed; think no more therefore of ſuch idle ſtuff! this is not diſcourſe for two people who love, and have ſo long been abſent from each other.

Roſſano. Ah, Syrenia! I wiſh the treatment I have received would allow me to entertain you with any other: there was a time when I could be as gay, perhaps, as he who now ſupplants me in your eſteem.

Syrenia. Still harping on the ſame ſtring; remember what the poet ſays:

No ſigns of love in jealous men remain,
But that which ſick men have of life, their pain.

She had juſt done repeating theſe lines when the tea equipage was brought in for breakfaſt, and Roſſano, who I could perceive by his countenance, was little pleaſed with the trifling anſwers ſhe had made

made to his reproaches, roſe up to take his leave, on which ſhe ſuddenly catch'd hold of his hand, and with a well counterfeited tenderneſs in her voice and eyes ſaid to him,

Syrenia. You will not go and leave me in this humour?

Roſſano. Indeed I muſt; I have this moment thought of a buſineſs that requires immediate diſpatch.

Syrenia. Shall I then ſee you in the afternoon?

Roſſano. I cannot promiſe.

He was half way down ſtairs while ſpeaking theſe laſt words, and though ſhe follow'd him two or three ſteps, and call'd to him to ſtay, he turned not, nor even look'd back upon her, but went haſtily out of the houſe. I was reſolved to ſee what was his intent, and accompanied him to the place of that kinſwoman where he had firſt ſeen Syrenia. He was beginning to tell her what cauſe of complaint he had againſt that lady; but ſhe ſtopp'd his mouth by ſaying ſhe was already acquainted with every thing he had to relate, and then proceeded to inform him, that having a friend who lived oppoſite to Syrenia, ſhe had learn'd that ſhe entertain'd a new lover, who viſited her almoſt every day, and that the neighbourhood believed it would very ſhortly be a match. Roſſano went from this relation to his own lodgings, where having vented ſome part of his rage in exclamations on the levity and ingratitude of womankind, he ſat down and wrote the following lines to Leontine:

'SIR,

'YOU have endeavoured to ſupplant me in 'the affection of the woman I loved, and am en- 'gaged to marry: I need not tell you I mean Sy- 'renia; I expect therefore you will either reſign 'all pretenſions to her under your own hand, or

'give

'give ſuch ſatisfaction as one gentleman has a right 'to demand from another in theſe caſes: I ſhall 'attend you behind Montague-houſe at eight to-'morrow morning, 'till when,

'Yours,

'ROSSANO.'

This he ſent immediately to Leontine, who happening to be at home, returned an anſwer by the bearer in theſe terms:

'SIR,

'I OWN myſelf a lover of Syrenia, but know 'nothing of your courtſhip to her, nor will believe 'ſhe is under any engagement of the nature you 'mention, either to you or any other man; and 'ſhall be ſo far from reſigning my pretenſions, that 'I will defend them to the laſt moment of my 'life; you may therefore rely on my meeting you 'at the time and place appointed.

'Yours, &c.

'LEONTINE.'

Roſſano had ſcarce finiſhed reading this billet, when a porter brought him a letter from Syrenia, the contents whereof were theſe:

'My very dear ROSSANO,

'YOUR behaviour this morning has thrown 'me into diſquiets which might excite compaſſion 'in a heart leſs devoted to me than I flattered my-'ſelf yours was: I thought the love between us 'was eſtabliſhed on a more ſolid baſis than to be 'ſhook by every puff of jealous caprice; I doubt 'not but to convince you that yours is no other. 'If this is ſo lucky as to find you at home, or 'you receive it time enough, I beg to ſee you this

'evening;

'evening; for I cannot bear you ſhould paſs another night in ſuch cruel ſuſpicions of

'Your faithfully affectionate

'SYRENIA.'

I perceived he was in ſome dilemma on reading this billet; he paus'd a while, then ſaid, 'My 'compliments to the lady, and—then paus'd again, at laſt cry'd, 'Tell her I am engaged this day, 'but will wait upon her to-morrow.'

Various reflections ſeemed now rolling in the mind of this much abus'd lover; but I left him in them, and contented myſelf with going the next morning to the field of battle, in order to ſee how the combatants would behave: — they were both ſo punctual to the time, that it is hard to ſay which of them was firſt within the liſts. Roſſano, however, having ſome idea of Leontine, as he had ſeen him through Syrenia's window, advanced towards him, and ſaid,

Roſſano. I gueſs, ſir, you are the gentleman I invited hither.

Leontine. You are not deceived, ſir, if your name be Roſſano.

Roſſano. The ſame, ſir.

Leontine. Mine then is Leontine, and you find me ready to maintain my pretenſions to the fair Syrenia.

Roſſano. And I to aſſert that right which a long ſeries of encouraged courtſhip and mutual vows have given me.

Leontine. This then is the way we muſt diſpute the prize.

Both their ſwords were already drawn, and Roſſano, either through ſuperior ſkill or better fortune, gave his antagoniſt a ſlight wound in the ſide on the firſt paſs, and on the ſecond a much deeper

deeper on the right arm, which occaſioning a great effuſion of blood, he was obliged to drop his ſword, on which the other, imagining the miſchief to be greater than it really prov'd, ſtepp'd haſtily towards him with theſe words: 'Sir, though I might ex-'pect the juſtice of my cauſe would give me ſome 'advantage over you, I ſhould be extremely ſorry 'to find it attended with any bad effects; I beg 'therefore, as there are ſcarce any chairs abroad ſo 'early, you will give me leave to ſupport you to 'my lodgings, which are very near, and where 'you may have immediate aſſiſtance.'

Leontine accepted the offer, a ſurgeon was immediately called, and his cloaths ſtripp'd off in order to have wounds examined; that on his ſide was not at all deep, and that on his arm happening not to be near any tendon, required little more than a tight bandage for its cure: he was adviſed, however, to drink ſome mull'd wine, and then endeavour to compoſe himſelf to ſleep for a few hours. Roſſano, with a great deal of humanity and politeneſs, took care to ſee this injuction performed, and on Leontine's requeſting it, ſent to his lodgings for freſh cloaths and linnen for him to put on when he ſhould awake.

As Roſſano was retiring to leave his gueſt to that repoſe which was thought needful for him, he ſaw a paper lying on the floor, which he took up, not knowing but it was ſomething belonging to himſelf; but how great was his amazement when he found what it contain'd, this being the very verſes Syrenia had wrote on Leontine, and had fortuitouſly been ſhook out of that gentleman's pocket as his cloaths were haſtily thrown to the other ſide of the room. 'Till now, the love he had bore Syrenia kept him from entertaining any worſe opinion of her conduct, than that it was the vanity incident to her ſex, which alone had made her encourage the

the addreſſes of Leontine; but this plain proof of her inconſtancy gave a ſudden turn to his ſentiments, and changed at once all the tenderneſs he ever had for her into contempt and hatred. Leontine had alſo ſome uneaſy thoughts on the ſcore of Syrenia; Roſſano ſeem'd to him to be a man of too much honour to aſſert a falſhood, and began to fear that himſelf had been deceived in his opinion of that lady's ſincerity. Being leſs inclined to ſleep than to be ſatisfied in this point, he rung a bell which hung by the bedſide, on which Roſſano, who was no farther than the next room, went in and aſked how he did; — to which he reply'd,

Leontine. So well that I think I need lie here no longer than 'till my man brings me ſome clean apparel, that I may riſe with decency; in the mean time, ſir, ſhould take it as a favour you would let me know how far I have been guilty of injuſtice to you in regard of Syrenia. In your billet to me, you mention an engagement; if it be ſo, I was perfectly ignorant of it, and at that time imagined I had ſtrong reaſons for diſbelieving; otherwiſe I do aſſure you, ſir, not all my paſſion for that lady ſhould have made me attempt to diſunite your loves.

Roſſano. Though it may ſeem ungenerous to boaſt a lady's favours, as I have no other way to juſtify my raſh proceeding towards you, be pleas'd to read that letter.

In ſpeaking this he preſented to Leontine the letter he had received from Syrenia the day before, which that gentleman had no ſooner looked over, than he cry'd out with the greateſt ſurpriſe.

Leontine. Good heaven! Why this was dated but yeſterday!

Roſſano. Yes, ſir, and wrote on account of my teſtifying ſome jealouſy on your being with her the evening before; but I have now done with that idle

idle paſſion, and can now reſign my claim with as much calmneſs as I would lately have maintained it with eagerneſs.

Leontine. Is it poſſible you can be in earneſt?

Roſſano. Were Syrenia more beautiful than ſhe is, the enjoyment of her perſon without her heart, could give me no happineſs; and had this paper, which accidentally fell from your pocket in the hurry this morning been put ſooner into my hands, I ſhould not have proceeded as I have done.

In ſpeaking this he gave Leontine the paper he had taken up; the other immediately ſaw what it was, and receiving it with a ſmile, made this reply: 'I thank you, ſir; but I aſſure you I am not at 'all vain of theſe verſes, as they ſerve only to prove 'that the lady was willing to be double arm'd, 'and in caſe one lover ſhould fail, to be provided 'with another.'

After this they began to enter into a very free diſcuſſion on the conduct of Syrenia towards them both, and there now appeared ſo much deceit, mean artifice, ingratitude, and perfidy, as well to the one as the other, that it is hard to ſay which of them entertain'd the moſt deſpicable notions of her: in fine, they agreed to reſent the impoſitions ſhe had practiſed on them in ſuch a manner, as ſome of my fair readers, how greatly ſoever they may condemn Syrenia, will not, perhaps, eaſily abſolve them for.

The ſervant of Leontine being arrived with the things his maſter had ordered to be brought, that gentleman roſe and got himſelf dreſs'd, and Roſſano in the mean time employed himſelf in gathering up all the letters he had received from Syrenia, and made them up in a large packet, and wrote on the cover,

'Amorous billets from a lady, of a very extraordi-
'nary character.'

They

They went in two chairs to the houſe where Syrenia lodged, and the door being opened, ruſhed up ſtairs without any ceremony, and even into the dining-room where ſhe was ſitting. Leontine was the firſt that entered; ſhe roſe to receive him, but ſeeing his arm in a ſcarf, cry'd out,

Syrenia. Oh, ſir, what accident has befallen you!

Leontine. No unlucky one, madam; I have, indeed, received two ſlight wounds on your account, but I bleſs the hand that gave them, ſince they have been the means of curing one of a more dangerous nature in my heart.

She had no time to aſk what he meant by theſe words, Roſſano was now in the room, and rejoin'd to what the other had ſaid in this manuer:

Roſſano. My heart is alſo in a pretty good condition too; for though I have loſt a miſtreſs, I have gained a friend, from whom I have reaſon to hope more ſincerity. You ſee, madam, two perſons together, whom doubtleſs you wiſhed to keep ſeparate, while we had ſeparate intereſts; but we have now agreed, and as we lately joined to perſecute you with our addreſſes, now join in the reſolution of troubling you no more.

Leontine. I have nothing to add, madam, to what my friend has delivered, but to reſtore this paper, which can be of no uſe to me, and may be of ſome to you, as change but the name, the picture may ſuit ſome happier man.

Roſſano. And I return thoſe letters you have from time to time favoured me with.

He then laid down the packet, at the ſame time Leontine did the verſes upon a table. Syrenia was all this while immoveable as a ſtatue, ſhe had found from their firſt entrance that they had compared notes, that ſhe was expoſed, her arts laid open, and her hopes irrecoverably loſt with

with both; fain ſhe would have ſpoke, but had no power; and all ſhe could utter at laſt was,

Syrenia. Mighty well; — ſo then I am to be inſulted!

Roſſano. No, madam, your birth and beauty are your protection; and had your mind been equal to either, neither of us, I believe, would have broke his chain, or even wiſh'd to regain that liberty we now have ſo much cauſe to trimph in.

Leontine. Come, ſir, you ſee the lady is diſconcerted; let us leave her to meditate on this adventure, it may of ſervice in ſome future one.

Roſſano. With all my heart. A good huſband to you, madam.

Leontine. I join in the ſame wiſh. Your ſervant, madam.

They departed with theſe words, and I ſtaid not long after them; the ſight of Syrenia's deſpair, how juſtly ſoever ſhe had brought it on herſelf, giving more pain than ſatisfaction.

End of the SEVENTH BOOK.

THE

THE
Inviſible Spy.

BOOK VIII.

CHAP. I.

Contains a very brief detail of ſuch occurrences as preſented themſelves to the Author's obſervation in an evening's Inviſible ramble through ſeveral parts of this metropolis.

IT has often been a matter of very great concern to me, and I believe muſt be the ſame to every thinking mind, to ſee how ſome people are continually hurried and buſied about mere trifles, of no manner of conſequence to themſelves, or ſcarce to any body elſe; while all the duties of religion, all the regard for the welfare of their moſt particular friends, all love of their country, and even the deareſt intereſts of their own families, are totally neglected. What judgment can we form of a perſon of this caſt, but that he has a vacuum in his head ready to be filled up with the firſt toy that preſents itſelf, and not being endowed with a ſtrength of reaſon ſufficient to direct his choice, ſuffers

ſuffers himſelf to be engroſs'd by ſuch things as he finds make moſt noiſe in the world, not ſuch as have moſt relation to his own affairs, either as to fortune or reputation.

Can there be a ſight more farcical than for a man, who, without any petition to prefer, or ſuit to ſolicit: in ſhort, without any call or buſineſs whatſoever, is continually cringing at the levee of a miniſter of ſtate, and when the compliments are paid, and the circle is diſmiſs'd, runs through the whole round of his acquaintance, reporting where he has been, and what he has ſeen, ſagaciouſly remarking on every nod, wink, or ſmile of the great man, and finding myſtery even in the tye of his wig, or the looſe or ſtrait buttoning of his coat?

Another, whoſe affairs at home, perhaps, are involved in the utmoſt perplexities, ſhall paſs the beſt part of his time among the Jobbers in 'Change-Alley, go from coffee-houſe to coffee-houſe, enquire of every broker he meets with the price of ſtocks, in which he has no ſhare, or money to purchaſe any, and be more ſolicitous in finding out the uſes to which the Sinking-Fund is appropriated, than for the means of extricating himſelf out of his preſent difficulties.

A third values himſelf much upon being a great connoiſſeur in politics, regiſters all the public papers from year to year, pretends to reconcile all the contradictions they contain, and to diſcover ſome latent meaning in every paragraph, and takes more pains to unriddle their imaginary enigmas than a poor ſervitor at the Univerſity does to tranſlate Perſeus for a rich ſtudent who pays, and fathers the labour of his brain.

Others have a taſte for building, are extremely curious in ornamenting the ſtructures they cauſe to be erected with carvings, paintings, and ſuch like

like ſuperficial beauties; but never once examine how the foundation is laid, or whether the pompous outworks may not be liable to ſink very ſoon into a heap of rubbiſh. Some employ their whole cares on the breeding and well managing their horſes, hounds, and game-cocks, leaving the education of their ſons entirely unregarded.

Impoſſible is it to enumerate the various trifles with which too many, even among the higheſt claſs of life, ſuffer themſelves not only to be amuſed, but wholly taken up; but I think, without any danger of being accuſed of too much ſeverity, one may juſtly ſay with Shakeſpear of ſuch men, that

The earth has bubbles as the waters hath,
And theſe are ſome of them.

In a word,—MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING, —is a play ſo univerſally acted in this town, that one can go to very few places without being witneſs of ſome ſcenes of it. As inſignificant, however, as theſe people may ſeem by the deſcription I have given of them, and as in effect they really are, they are yet of more conſequence to the public than is generally believed, or than they themſelves, with all the ſtock of vanity they are uſually poſſeſſed of, are capable of imagining: this, though it may be thought a paradox, will be eaſy for me to make appear, as thus:—Theſe unjudging creatures, for I have already proved them to be ſuch, are frequently made the tools by which evil and deſigning men faſhion out their ends. When thoſe in power have any thing on foot, from which they find it neceſſary to divert the attention of the nation, it is but throwing out ſome whiſper, though of ever ſo abſurd and ridiculous a nature, among the people I am ſpeaking of, and they will immediately ring it in the

the ears of the populace 'till it becomes the cry, and every argument that truth and reaſon can alledge is deafened with the noiſe.

An experience of many years, joined with a diligent obſervation of the world, has convinced me, beyond all doubt, that theſe inconſiderates, without being ſenſible of the miſchief they do, have been, and daily are, the inſtruments of propagating the moſt infamous ſcandals, groſs falſities, and baſe aſperſions on the great and good; as alſo the moſt ridiculous and idle ſtories, invented and calculated by men of more thinking heads, to amuſe and divert the attention of the public from what moſt demands its regard. A glaring inſtance of this latter kind now takes up the town, all mouths are full of it, all ears open to it; but it appears to me that there are few eyes clear enough to diſcern the ſecret ground-work of this mountain of abſurdities, and on what motive it was erected. I think it is not my province however, nor ſhall preſume to inform the judgment of any one in this point, but ſhall only relate a paſſage I happen'd to be witneſs of, which every one is at liberty to deſcant upon as he ſhall think proper.

Being one day on the other ſide of the Royal-Exchange, when ſome buſineſs I had there being diſpatch'd, ſooner than I expected, it came into my head to call in at a certain celebrated coffee-houſe, which I had been told was frequented by a great number of the moſt eminent and wealthy citizens; but as I had no acquaintance with them, and ſome other more ſubſtantial reaſons for not appearing in propria perſona, I choſe to go in my Inviſible capacity. Purſuant to this reſolution I ſtepped into the firſt obſcure alley I could find, and there girded on my precious Belt, which, as well as my Tablets, I ſeldom went out without taking with me, and then haſtened to the place I mentioned.

I found the room very full of company, moſt of whom were of that ſect of diſſenters from the eſtabliſh'd church which are under the denomination of Preſbyterians: I would not here be underſtood to mean any thing in ridicule of thoſe gentlemen, for I love and revere every man of real virtue and good ſenſe, be he of what perſuaſion ſoever. How far the perſons I have juſt now occaſion to ſpeak of anſwer to either of theſe characters I will not pretend to ſay, let their own words teſtify; I ſhall, according to the phraſe of the inſpired writer, ſet a guard upon my mouth, that I offend not with my lips. But to proceed.

Three or four, who I afterwards perceived were leading men among them, were engag'd in a very warm diſpute with a gentleman, who endeavour'd, with a great deal of ſpirit, to expoſe the groſs abſurdities and falſhood of a cauſe they took upon them to maintain, and with a kind of magiſterial air attempted to enforce the belief of in others. The odds appear'd to me at firſt, I confeſs, to be a little ungenerous: but I was the more ſtrengthen'd in this opinion, when I heard the manner in which they delivered their arguments, and that were urg'd in favour of one of the moſt prepoſterous and ridiculous complaints that ever engaged the attention of any men of common ſenſe. After ſaying this, I think it is needleſs to add, it was the affair of Squires and Canning. As I am utterly unacquainted with the names either of thoſe who defended the cauſe of the latter, or of him who treated it with contempt, I ſhall diſtinguiſh the one by that of Aſſertors, and the other by that of Opponent. The converſation which paſs'd on both ſides, after I had got a convenient place to poſt myſelf, and had ſpread my Tablets, I ſhall give the public a faithful tranſcript of, as taken from thoſe unerring teſtimonies, and was as the reader will find underwritten.

Firſt

Firſt Aſſertor I am ſurpriſed, ſir, you ſhould rack your brain for arguments againſt the cauſe of helpleſs innocence and virtue in diſtreſs.

Second Aſſertor. 'Tis barbarous, 'tis cruel. Where ſhall we find an object of compaſſion if Betty Canning is not one? We know her, ſir.

Third Aſſertor. Ay, ſhe is of our congregation, has always been a diligent frequenter of the meeting-houſe, and fervent in her devotions.

Opponent. So becauſe ſhe is of your congregation, it naturally follows ſhe muſt be chaſte; the lambs of your flock never go aſtray; but I forbear to make any reflection on this ſcore, and ſhall only ſay, I never ſhall give credit to a ſtory ſo full of inconſiſtencies and improbabilities as this which has been forged by her and her accomplices.

Firſt Aſſertor. Sir, there is no reaſoning againſt facts: ſhe has ſworn to the truth of it before a magiſtrate, and that magiſtrate has teſtified his belief of it.

Opponent. Yes, the ſtory ſhe told was romantic, it ſuited his taſte, he thought it might be a proper ſubject to work up into a Farce or Puppet ſhew, ſo was willing to promote the credibility of it.

Firſt Aſſertor. Mere ſpite and ſcandal.

Opponent. Not at all; and I doubt not but the impoſition will be fully laid open by another magiſtrate, ſuperior in every degree to him who takes her part.

Firſt Aſſertor. Sir, it is prophane and impious in him, or you, or any man, to eſpouſe the cauſe of a wicked old hag, a vagabond, a gipſey, ſuch as Mary Squires; and a known inſtrument of libidinous pleaſures, ſuch as mother Wells.

Opponent. Gentlemen, I have nothing to alledge in defence of theſe creatures; but that however guilty they may have been, or continue to be,

in other reſpects, they are entirely innocent in this they are accuſed of.

Firſt Aſſertor. No, no, 'tis impoſſible.

Opponent. Saying a thing does not prove it to be ſo; but give me leave only to offer a few queries, in relation to ſome of the many inconſiſtencies in the tale told by that idle wench, Betty Canning.

Second Aſſertor. Do ſo, we ſhall know how to anſwer them.

Opponent. Firſt then, ſuppoſing her to have been robbed in the manner ſhe pretends by two ruffians, what could induce fellows who live upon the ſpoil, after having taken from her all they found worth taking, to quit the purſuit of other booty, and loſe their time in dragging her into the country, only to throw her into the houſe, and then leave her there; for ſhe does not accuſe them of making any attempt upon her chaſtity?

Firſt Aſſertor. As to that, it is highly probable they might be fee'd by mother Wells to bring the firſt young woman they could meet with to her houſe, in order to be made a ſacrifice to her mercenary views, and the luſt of ſome vile fellow.

Opponent. Then they would certainly have choſe an object of a more tempting aſpect, or would have deſerved little for their pains; but let that paſs. If it were as you imagine, would any woman, who it is ſaid has long been in practice in the ſeducing trade, have behaved towards the prey brought into her clutches in the manner ſhe did to Betty Canning? Would ſhe not rather have ſooth'd the frighted maid, reviv'd her drooping ſpirits with good eating and drinking, promis'd her fine cloaths, and then introducing ſome man to her, who might have allur'd her to the ſin ſhe aimed to make her guilty of? Surely the way to tempt her to be a proſtitute was not to lock her up alone in a wild deſolate

ſolate room, without a bed to lie upon, or any other refreſhment than a little bread and water; ſuch uſage, one muſt think, was intended to mortify, not excite a carnal inclination.

Firſt Aſſertor. Sir, I am grieved, greatly grieved in ſpirit, to find you ſo ignorant of the force of virtue; I tell you, ſir, that the courage and reſolution of this virgin ſtruck ſuch an awe into the minds of thoſe profligate wretches ſhe was placed among, that they had not the power of putting their wicked deſigns in execution; Heaven, indeed, for a trial of her patience, permitted them to diſtreſs her helpleſs innocence, but not to deſtroy it.

Opponent. Very extraordinary, truly. But pray, ſir, why did this ſuffering ſaint remain ſo long under the roof of ſuch abandoned creatures, ſince all accounts agree that in three days, nay in three hours after her confinement, ſhe had the ſame opportunity of making her eſcape as at the time ſhe pretends to have effected it?

Second Aſſertor. Her eyes were not open to the means of her deliverance 'till that bleſſed moment; it was ordained ſhe ſhould undergo the perſecution ſhe did, in order to make her virtue more triumphant over ſin and ſhame.

Opponent. Oh, gentlemen, theſe arguments will never be ſwallowed any where but in a conventicle.

Third Aſſertor. Sir, they will always have their due weight with every one but a reprobate.

Opponent. How, ſir!

The Opponent was ſo much incens'd at theſe words, that he ſtarted from his ſeat, and was about to reply with his fiſt, but ſome of the more moderate part of the company interpoſed, and prevented the miſchief that might otherwiſe have enſued. By their perſuaſions he ſat down again, and

the diſpute would doubtleſs have been renewed, it may be with greater vehemence than before, if a drawer from a neighbouring tavern had not luckily come and told him that two gentlemen, whoſe names he mentioned, deſired to ſpeak with him; on which he went away, perhaps to the great ſatisfaction of the aſſertors of Betty Canning's cauſe, who, if he had ſtaid and continued his queries, might probably have been a little puzzled to find anſwers to them.

During the debate I have been repeating, every one in the room kept a profound ſilence; but afterwards the converſation became general, ſeveral other ſubjects were ſtarted by particular perſons, but they were not liſten'd to, the majority ſeemed to have their heads ſo full of Betty Canning, that they could ſcarce thing or ſpeak of any thing beſide. 'Tis true, indeed, they did not all give credit to her ſtory, yet the poſitiveneſs with which they heard it affirmed, made the leaſt credulous divided in their thoughts, and afraid to paſs a judgment either on the one or the other ſide of the queſtion. The reader will doubtleſs naturally ſuppoſe that it was impoſſible for me to live in the world, and have any acquaintance in it, without having heard, long before I came to this place, much talk of Elizabeth Canning, her pitiful diſtreſs, her miraculous preſervation and eſcape, and all the other prodigies of that amazing ſtory.

'Tis true, indeed, I was a ſtranger to no part of it; but then my converſation being chiefly among the gay part of the town, I was not much ſurpriſed that people who can find very little to employ their thoughts ſhould be fond of a tale which had ſo much of the marvellous in it; as children, before they arrive at years capable of being inſtructed in more ſolid matters, liſten with pleaſure to their nurſes ſtories of giants, fairies,

and

and enchanted caſtles; as ſuch I regarded all they ſaid, and thought no farther of it. But when I heard grave citizens, men of buſineſs, of a ſedate deportment and good underſtanding in other things, argue with ſerious countenances on ſuch a heap of wild abſurdities, I cannot ſay whether my aſtoniſhment or indignation had moſt dominion over my faculties; but this I know, that both together deſtroyed all the little ſtock of patience I was maſter of, and would not ſuffer me to ſtay any longer to liſten to thoſe inſignificant debates which I found were likely to continue among this company.

CHAP. II.

Relates ſome farther incidents of a pretty particular nature, which fell under the Author's obſervation in the ſame evening's Inviſible progreſſion.

THOSE turbulent emotions which the ſcene I had juſt come from being witneſs of had rais'd in me, being ſomewhat quieted by air and walking, I had the curioſity to call in at another great coffee-houſe, hoping I ſhould find there ſomething to give a turn to the preſent diſpoſition of my mind. But I found that the remains of my ill-humour were not to be ſo ſoon diſſipated as I had imagin'd. Here was indeed a vaſt deal of company, clerks in public offices, lawyers, phyſicians, tradeſmen, and ſome few divines, compoſed the promiſcuous aſſembly; but all were engaged on the ſame dirty draggle-tail ſubject, as one of our news-writers juſtly terms it; the names of Betty Canning, the Gipſey, and mother Wells, reſounded from each quarter of the crowded room,

and the cauſe then depending between theſe creatures made the whole converſation at every table.

Here I would not be at the trouble of opening my Tablets, eaſily perceiving that nothing worthy of being recorded in them, or of communicating to the public, was likely to enſue; and alſo that the ſmalleſt part of time I ſhould waſte in this company, would be paying too dear for any diſcourſes I ſhould hear from them. Accordingly I left the houſe after having ſtaid there about ſeven minutes; but had not reach'd the next ſtreet before a confuſed noiſe behind obliged me to ſtand up in the porch of a door 'till the hubbub was paſſed by.

The occaſion of this uproar preſently appeared; it was a poor fellow carried on a bier, with very little ſigns of life in him, —his face covered with blood which iſſued from his noiſe and mouth, his cloaths torn that the naked fleſh appeared in many places; but ſo deformed with bruiſes that it could ſcarce be known for what it was; a mixed rabble of men, women and children followed, ſhouting, hallooing, and crying, it was good enough for him, and that they were glad he had got his reward.

I was ſtartled at ſo much inhumanity, for I thought nothing could excuſe ſuch cruel treatment, though I doubted not but the fellow had been guilty of ſome attrocious crime, but I was ſoon undeceived in this point, and let into the whole affair; which was no other than a quarrel this fellow had entered into on account of Canning.

I had now no deſign in my head, no particular courſe to ſteer; but as I was entirely free from any engagement that evening, and thought it too ſoon to go home, I rambled from one ſtreet to another for a conſiderable time, yet without meeting

ing any one thing ſufficient to tempt my curioſity to make a farther enquiry into. Any obſerving reader may reaſonably imagine, that the little ſatisfaction I had been able to reap in the viſits I had made at the two coffee-houſes I had been already in, would have hindered me from going into another, and indeed I was of that opinion myſelf; but I ſoon found I was miſtaken, and ſo will he; I really ventured into a third, but the motive which excited me to do ſo was this:

As I was paſſing by I perceived thro' the windows, for then the candles within were lighted up, ſeveral gentlemen with news-papers before them, on which they ſeemed to be diſcourſing with each other with a great deal of ſerioufneſs and gravity, As I have naturally an extreme paſſion for knowing the affairs of the world, thoſe of Europe eſpecially, I thought it highly elegible in me to hear what was ſaid upon them by perſons who had the appearance of ſome underſtanding in them. At the firſt table I came to were ſix or ſeven gentlemen, moſt of them were ſome way or other concerned in the Britiſh Herring-fiſhery; but tho' they talked very learnedly on the ſubject, it ſuited not my taſte, ſo ſtaid not long with them, but adjourned to the next company. Theſe were merchants, who I found were greatly diſconcerted at an article they had been juſt reading in relation to the ſtrict engagements the French had entered into with the Indians, and the daily incurſions thoſe miſcalled friends and allies made on the Engliſh colonies; but as I cannot pretend to any ſkill in commerce, I did not ſpread my Tablets to receive the impreſſion of their diſcourſe; ſo can only ſay in general, that they made very heavy complaints, and cry'd out, that if ſpeedy care were not taken to put a ſtop to thoſe proceedings, trade muſt be

ruin'd, and our ſettlements in that part of the world utterly deſtroyed.

The third table was filled with perſons who ſeemed to be of no avocation, nor at all intereſted in any branch of buſineſs or public affairs; but talk'd of every thing they had been reading merely as things which afforded matter for converſation. On my joining them, the magnanimity of the Pruſſian monarch was the topic; they extolled his wiſdom, his bravery, his temperance, his clemency, the encouragement he gave to merit whereſoever he found it, and all unanimouſly agreed that he was the father of his people, a bleſſing to the land he governed, and a pattern to his fellow-rulers of the earth. The juſt admiration I ever had of this truly great and moſt amiable prince, excluſive of that regard due to him as ſo near a relation to our gracious ſovereign, would certainly have kept me at that table as long as the company had continued ſpeaking on ſo agreeable a ſubject, if I had not been hurried from it by a propenſity, I believe, more or leſs natural to all mankind, that of being moſt eager to explore what is hid from us with moſt care.

I obſerved at a little table, which was placed at one corner of the room, a good diſtance from the others, two elderly perſons, who ſeemed very earneſt in diſcourſe on ſome important and ſecret affair; by the winks, nods, and other inſignificant geſtures, I doubted not but that they were profound politicians, and were diſcuſſing ſome extraordinary tranſaction of the cabinet. Their heads were pretty cloſe together, and they ſpoke in ſo low a voice as to render it impoſſible to be heard by any one except each other; but this precaution had no efficacy when once my wonderful Tablets were diſplay'd, which had this excellent property of receiving the impreſſion of whatever was ſaid within the diſtance

of

of nine yards, tho' utter'd in the moſt ſoft whiſper. On my drawing near to them, they ſeem'd a little impatient for the coming of a perſon who they expected, and who preſently appear'd; as ſoon as he had ſeated himſelf the following dialogue enſued:

Firſt Man. Oh, Mr. Slycraft, I am glad you are come; we were beginning to think you long.

Slycraft. I am ſomewhat beyond my hour, indeed; but I aſſure you nothing could have made me ſo but the good of the cauſe.

Second Man. Your zeal and diligence are not to be doubted; but let us hear what ſucceſs your endeavours have met with.

Slycraft. Truly not ſo much as I hoped; I do not think there is a more difficult thing in the world than getting people to ſubſcribe; I have been half the town over and have been able to procure no more than three.

Firſt Man. Then I hope they are fat ones.

Slycraft. Pretty well, as times go; Credulous Woodcock, Eſq; has ſet his name for twenty guineas.

Firſt Man. Very handſome; five or ſix hundred ſuch as he would do the buſineſs.

Slycraft. Aye, but where ſhall we find them?

Second Man. Well, but who are the others?

Slycraft. Then there is Mr. Simon Gooſly, the haberdaſher, ten guineas, but has promiſed to prevail on ſome friends of his to ſet their names very generouſly.

Second Man. I dare ſay he will do all he can. But have you ſeen Mrs. Waver?

Slycraft. Yes, but ſhe ſtill deſires a little more time to conſider; ſays, ſhe will enquire farther into the affair, and hear what her friends think of it; and all I could get from her was an aſſurance, that

if ſhe found it proper to ſubſcribe at all ſhe would not ſet her name for leſs than an hundred pieces.

Firſt Man. Then we may be pretty certain of her; for I know ſhe will be directed by Mr. Cantwell, the Nonconformiſt preacher, who labours all he can to promote the cauſe in queſtion.

Second Man. Have you yet found an opportunity of talking with the Orator?

Slycraft. I was with him above an hour, and when I had once convinced him that he ſhould find his account in it, he gave me his word and honour that he would rant and roar 'till his chapel echoes in favour of the party.

Firſt Man. That is well; all engines muſt be ſet to work, or the town will grow cool on this buſineſs, and begin to renew their clamour againſt the Jew bill, &c. the ſpirit of the people will have vent on ſomething or another, and you know it behoves us to keep them ſilent on thoſe ſcores; nothing ever did it more effectually than this we are upon; but it muſt be kept up for a time: I could wiſh, methinks, we had the Weſleys on our ſide.

Second Man. 'Tis a vain attempt, they are now grown too rich to accept of a ſmall gratuity; and I much queſtion whether their exhortations would anſwer the expence.

Slycraft. I am of your opinion: beſides, you know there a a perſon who can influence their congregations as much as any thing they can hear from the pulpit. But I will tell you what I have done to day.—I have engaged a clergyman of the eſtabliſh'd church to write a pamphlet in behalf of the cauſe we have in hand.

Firſt Man. A clergyman of the eſtabliſh'd church employ his pen in behalf of ſuch a cauſe? Prithee, Slycraft, how did'ſt thou work upon him? it muſt certainly be by ſome very extraordinary method.

Slycraft.

Slycraft. The promiſe of a ſmall preſent at firſt wrought upon his neceſſities; but on my telling him who and who were concerned in this buſineſs, and the motives which induced them to be ſo, the hopes of having a good fat living, made him wholly ours.

Firſt Man. Admirable!

Second Man. But may we depend upon his ſecrecy?

Slycraft. Never doubt that, as his own intereſt is concern'd.

Firſt Man. Hitherto things go pretty ſwimmingly on our ſide. But let me ſee the ſubſcription book; I have received five guineas to day from Mr. Prim, and muſt inſert his name.

'Till now I was at the greateſt loſs, as 'tis probable the reader will alſo be, to know what all this meant, or in whoſe favour or on what account the ſubſcription they talked of was raiſed; but on Mr. Slycraft's delivering the book to his friend, I look'd over the ſhoulder of the latter as he open'd it, and ſaw in the firſt leaf, by way of title page, theſe words wrote in a very fair hand:

A Liſt of thoſe worthy perſons who have ſubſcribed to the relief of ELIZABETH CANNING.

The names underwritten were too numerous to be inſerted, I ſhall therefore only ſay, that the ſum of what was raiſed by their ſubſcription amounted to little leſs than a thouſand pounds;—Monſtrous abuſe of charity! Prepoſterous benevolence! which will hereafter reflect more ſhame than honour on the beſtowers.——'Good God! ſaid I to myſelf, 'in an age when numberleſs, nameleſs miſeries 'abound,—when all our priſons labour with the 'weight of wretches confined within their walls,

'many

'many for ſmall debts which their neceſſities 'obliged them to contract, and ſome by unjuſt 'and malicious proſecutions; — whilſt every pa-'riſh, nay almoſt every ſtreet, affords objects of 'real diſtreſs; — while a girl ſprung from the 'loweſt dregs of the people, bred up to toil, a 'drudge, one of the very meaneſt claſs of ſervants, 'receives donations which ſhe as little knows how 'to make a proper uſe of as to deſerve! — a girl, 'who if ſhe had really ſuffer'd all ſhe pretends to 'have done, would indeed have had a claim to 'juſtice againſt thoſe who had wrong'd her, but 'none to the bounties ſo laviſhly beſtowed upon 'her.'

Theſe kind of meditations would doubtleſs have accompanied me to my own door, if they had not been interrupted, as well as my courſe towards home, by an unexpected accident, which the reader will find faithfully related in the ſucceeding chapter.

CHAP. III.

Preſents the reader with an adventure of much more importance to the public than any contained in the two laſt foregoing chapters.

THE human heart is liable to many bad propenſities, which if not timely corrected by reaſon ſhoot forth into practice, and become vices; but of theſe there are two ſorts,—the one born with us, and part of our nature,—the other imbibed by the fatal prevalence of example, and rooted in us by cuſtom, which is a ſecond nature. Thoſe born with us, as the indulging them is attended with ſome pleaſure, urge in their defence the unconquerable deſire of gratifying the ſenſes:

—the

—the luſtful man pleads the warmth of his conſtitution, and the ſtrong allurements of beauty; — the ſoul of the ambitious triumphs and exults on every degree of power he gains over his fellow-creatures; — the miſer thinks himſelf happy in counting over his bags, and being maſter of a thing that will purchaſe all things elſe; and the epicure feels no care, no ſorrow, while he is emptying the full charged goblet, and pallating the delicious viand. But what has the blaſphemer, the profane ſwearer, or the gameſter to alledge in his vindication? Theſe are crimes in which nature has no part, nor are the ſenſes any way concerned in them, as they neither excite nor feel any ſatisfaction in them. One might therefore be apt to imagine, that men thus guilty ſinn'd merely for the ſake of ſinning; but I will not allow myſelf to think that there are many ſo impudently daring, a few diſtinguiſhed perſons will ſerve to bring up a mode, and every one knows that at preſent an indiſcriminate imitation is the reigning folly of the Engliſh nation.

Theſe were reflections which occurr'd to me after I came home, as I was about to tranſcribe the remaining part of my evening's progreſs out of my precious Tablets. I had ſome farther thoughts on the occaſion, but as they might ſeem more proper for the pulpit than a work of this nature, I ſhall add no more, but proceed to the narrative of that adventure which gave riſe to them.

As I was paſſing in my way home, thro' a ſtreet of no very good repute, two perſons from a little narrow alley bolted haſtily upon me, to the no ſmall danger of my Inviſibilityſhip, if an agility not very common with me had not that inſtant enabled me to give a ſudden ſpring, by which I avoided the ruſh I muſt otherwiſe have received. They went on before me; the night was extremely dark, neither

ther moon nor ſtars to aſſiſt the viſual ray; but by the help of ſome candles burning in a ſhop not yet ſhut up, I diſtinguiſhed that the one was very richly dreſs'd, and had much the appearance of a man of faſhion; and that the other was a fellow I had often ſeen on many occaſions, and whoſe character I was perfectly acquainted with.

Scarce is there a greater villain to be found in low-life; I ſay in low-life, becauſe ſhould any perſons in authority, or dignified with titles, which heaven forbid, ever appear in this nation, to deſerve ſuch black denominations, their crimes would, like their ranks, be diſtinguiſhed, and though placed in an orb too high to be reached by the juſt vengeance of their oppreſs'd fellow-creatures, would doubtleſs incur what Mr. Addiſon makes Cato prophetically ſay in relation to Julius Cæſar, on his endeavouring to ſubvert the old Roman conſtitution, and become abſolute and perpetual dictator:

Sure there are bolts in the right hand of Jove,
Red with uncommon wrath to blaſt the man
Who owes his greatneſs to his country's ruin.

But to return to my little knave. The wretch is now called Mr. Makeplea; he was formerly ſervant to a lawyer whom I employ'd in ſeveral affairs I had the misfortune to be engaged in. Living with that gentleman a conſiderable time, he pick'd up ſome ſcraps of law, and all the terms and phraſes of that abſtruſe ſcience by rote; knew how to take out a writ, ſet an officer to work, fill up a bail-bond, and procure evidences in a dubious cauſe. With this fund he had the impudence, after his maſter's death, to pretend he had been his clerk, got himſelf enter'd as an attorney, and has ever ſince practiſed as ſuch. His ſole buſineſs, however, as may be eaſily ſuppoſed, has always been among

among the very meaneſt ſort of people, fomenting litigious quarrels, and then making them up, after having drained the purſes on both ſides. I could not therefore avoid being amazed at ſeeing him in the company I now did; but my wonder ſoon ceaſed on hearing, as I was cloſe at their heels, the following diſcourſe between them:

Makeplea. It is very lucky, Mr. Coaxum, that I happen'd to be at home when you came; there are ſome of the profeſſion who would have ſcrupled to undertake this buſineſs; but for my part, I am always ready to venture any thing to ſerve my friends.

Coaxum. My dear Makeplea, you never loſt any thing, nor ever ſhall, by our fraternity; I know there are ſome who will ſneak their heads out of the collar, and leave their lawyer in the lurch.

Makeplea. Aye faith, I narrowly eſcaped the pillory once; a vile dog, who, after I had procured him three evidences, pretended a panic in his conſcience, threw up his cauſe, and ſuffer'd himſelf to be nonſuited.

Coaxum. You know we ſcorn ſuch doings; and I can tell you this will be a pretty good job to you; we drain'd the fool's pocket of above an hundred pieces before we play'd upon credit, ſo that there is enough in bank to make you a handſome preſent for your trouble.

Makeplea. Well, but concerning this reverſion, —I hope he has loſt enough to give an air of juſtice; that is, a *quantum ſufficit* for the making over his eſtate after the deceaſe of his father?

Coaxum. Upwards of a thouſand pounds, beſides a gold watch and a diamond ring, which he ſeems to ſet a high value upon; the two laſt Count Cogdy has agreed to ſell him again at a great price; ſo that altogether the ſum will amount to a ſufficient

ficient purchaſe of the reverſion of an eſtate of four hundred a year,—eſpecially as the preſent poſſeſſor is not above fifty, and may live a long time. Beſides, we hear the young fellow is going to be married to a woman of fortune, ſo that the deeds may be made redeemable; we do not regard his dirty acres, the ready rhino is what we want, and he may pay the money out of his wife's fortune, and be clear of us again.

Makeplea. Oh, then it will be a mortgage rather than a ſale. Who are with him?

Coaxum. Only Count Cogdy, Jack Hazard, and Tom Wheadle.

Makeplea. They cannot be witneſſes, as I ſuppoſe they are parties concerned.

Coaxum. We are equal ſharers in the booty; but the money was loſt wholly to the Count. However, there will be no want of witneſſes, the landlord of the houſe and his ſon will ſet their hands.

Theſe words brought them to a door, which being open'd at the firſt knock, by one of the moſt ill-look'd fellows that ever diſgrac'd human nature, they went through a long dark narrow paſſage into a back parlour, where I accompanied them, and was witneſs of a ſcene ſomewhat like what I remember to have ſeen ſome years ago in a play of Mrs. Centlivre's, call'd the Gameſter. Count Cogdy, as he was call'd, ſat leaning his arm upon a table in a careleſs poſture; Jack Hazard was walking backwards and forwards in the room humming an old tune; a gentleman, whoſe name I had not yet heard, had thrown himſelf acroſs two chairs with all the tokens of deſpair about him; Tom Wheadle ſtood near him, and as we came in was endeavouring to give him ſome conſolation, in theſe terms: 'Prithee, dear Clerimont, do not 'be thus diſconcerted; I have loſt as much as you

'twenty

'twenty times over, and as often recovered it 'again; theſe things will happen to gentlemen 'that play: fortune, indeed, has been againſt you 'to-night, but may not always be ſo; one lucky 'hit at another time may bring all back.'

Clerimont made no anſwer, nor ſeem'd to regard what he ſaid, 'till hearing the name of Makeplea, and Count Cogdy beginning to inſtruct him in the buſineſs he was to do, that unfortunate gentleman ſtarted up at once, and ſtaring ſomewhat wildly in the face of Makeplea, cry'd to him,

Clerimont. Are you the fiend who is to convey my ſoul, that is, my eſtate, into the regions of eternal darkneſs, whence it can never, never more return?

Makeplea. What do you mean, ſir,

Cogdy. The gentleman is only a little out of humour. Faith, Mr. Clerimont, you do not do well to behave in this faſhion; you have loſt ſome money, indeed, but you have loſt it fairly; I never take an advantage of any man, and ſhall be ready to give you your revenge at any time.

Hazard. Aye, I will ſay that for the Count, he ſcorns a mean thing.

Cogdy. I believe there is not a more unlucky fellow at play in the world than myſelf, though I have happen'd to win to-night; yet, as I ſaid before, I am ready to give Mr. Clerimont an opportunity of retrieving all he has loſt whenever he pleaſes: for my part, I would ſtake all I am worth againſt a pair of ſhoe-buckles, rather than any gentleman ſhould think I impoſed upon him.

Ceaxum. No, no, you are above any ſuch thing.

Hazard. We all know that.

Makeplea. Come, come, gentlemen, this is doing nothing, all loſs of time, and every moment of mine is precious; there are two noblemen now waiting

waiting for me at the Garter tavern; pray proceed to the buſineſs; let me know how the deeds I have brought with me are to be fill'd up.

Cogdy. I will tell you immediately; but firſt I muſt do juſtice to this gentleman. Here, ſir, are the watch and ring you ſtak'd, the value of which, you know, is added to the other ſums.

Clerimont put the one in his pocket and the other on his finger with a deep ſigh, and the Count went on repeating to Makeplea the ſubſtance of what he was to write; the latter, at the end of every article, demanded of Clerimont whether he agreed to it; to which he ſullenly reply'd, 'I do; 'I ſee no other remedy.' The lawyer having diſpatched his part, Clerimont was deſir'd to ſign and ſeal; he did both, but with ſuch a trembling hand, and viſible diſtraction of mind, that my heart bled for him. In delivering the writings to the Count he ſaid,

Clerimont. There, ſir,—I ſuppoſe this is all that is required of me, and I may now depart.

Cogdy. No, no, we muſt have a bottle and a bird together, to ſhew we are all ſtill good friends.

Hazard. Aye, and each of us a wench too; I I know where there is a covey of as young, pretty, plump partridges as any in Covent-Garden.

Cleriment. Rot your bottle and your bird and your wenches; I have done with them, and you, and the whole world for ever.

In ſpeaking theſe words he ſnatch'd up his ſword and hat, and ran directly out of the houſe. As for me, I had as little inclination as himſelf to ſtay in the company of ſuch blood-ſuckers; but having never ſeen him before, I was curious to know ſomewhat more of him, and alſo how he would behave when alone, and at liberty to ruminate on the misfortune he had plunged himſelf into, ſo follow'd his ſteps with all the ſpeed I could.

It

It was not difficult to keep pace with him; for though he gain'd ground of me at firſt, he ſoon halted and gave me an opportunity of coming up with him. Never did man traverſe the ſtreets with more diſorder'd motions, croſſing the way an hundred times, I believe, within the ſpace of half a quarter of a mile, without having the leaſt occaſion to do ſo: ſometimes he would run as if in purſuit of ſomebody, and ſometimes ſtand quite ſtill; and it was well the darkneſs of the night befriended him, otherwiſe whoever had met him would doubtleſs have taken him to be mad.

In this faſhion he went thro' part of the Strand, and turn'd down one of thoſe ſtreets leading to the water-ſide; he ſtopp'd about the middle of it at a door, and had his hand upon the knocker, but a ſudden thought coming that inſtant into his head, he left it without making the ſignal for admittance, and walked ſlowly to the end of the ſtreet, where leaning on a little wall that overlooks the river, he remain'd for ſome minutes in the moſt thoughtful and contemplative attitude; then ſaid to himſelf, 'How profound! — how ſolemn is the ſilent 'ſcene! inviting to a certain reſt from miſery and 'ſhame! Here, within the boſom of this friendly 'element, may all my follies and misfortunes be 'hid for ever from the talking world!'

I fear'd nothing leſs would enſue, than that I ſhould ſee him preſently attempt to do as his words had hinted; I therefore drew as near to him as I could, in order to prevent ſo bad an effect of his deſpair. Here I cannot help remarking, that if the thing had happen'd as I expected, and Clerimont had found himſelf ſnatch'd from his fate by an Inviſible hand, he would doubtleſs have imagined his preſervation owing to the interpoſition of ſome Supernatural Being, and reported it as a miracle.

But

But how he would have acted on ſuch an odd occaſion is uncertain; for after a pauſe, and diſburthening himſelf of ſome few ſighs, he ſtarted from the poſture he had been in, and cry'd, 'No, '—it muſt not be;—I have ſome buſineſs ſtill for 'life,—revenge on the curſed cheat, the villain 'that has undone me. Love too demands ſome-'thing from me; but by what means I ſhall re-'pay that mighty debt, I know not.—Oh Char-'lotte! Charlotte! on how loſt a wretch haſt 'thou beſtow'd thy heart!'

Theſe words were utter'd with a groan which ſeem'd to cleave his breaſt, and were the laſt I heard from him at that time: he turn'd back, and went haſtily to the houſe where he had firſt ſtopp'd, the door was open'd on his knocking, and too ſuddenly ſhut again for me to have enter'd with him if I had intended it; but the variety of accidents preſented to me in this evening's ramble had already ſufficiently filled my head, and made me glad to retire to my repoſe.

CHAP IV.

Relates ſome paſſages which may probably draw ſighs from many a tender heart of both ſexes.

THE next morning running over in my mind the detail of the tranſactions of the evening before, the vexation I had received on the ſcore of Betty Canning very much ſubſided, and I look'd upon the whole thing as below a ſerious conſideration. I could not help, indeed, retaining ſome concern that the people of England ſhould be ſo infatuated as to ſuffer their thoughts to be led aſtray and alienated from affairs of the greateſt conſequence by ſuch an idle ſtory; but as I doubted not but that

that the impoſition ſhe had been guilty of would be detected, though her abettors might perhaps find means to ſcreen her perſon from the puniſhment, I became more eaſy, and reſolved to baniſh as much as poſſible all remembrance of it.

But my ideas were widely different in regard to poor Clerimont; as much a ſtranger as he was to me, I was convinced, by what I had ſeen and heard, that as he had no ſtock of ready money to prevent the mortgage he had made of his reverſion, ſo I was equally aſſured, by his deſpair, that he had no viſible means of raiſing a ſum ſufficient to redeem it. His calling on the name of Charlotte with ſo much vehemence made me alſo not doubt but that he had ſome tender attachment, which he feared would be broke through by what he had done.

Though I know no vice for which I have a more real contempt than the love of gaming, yet the age of this gentleman, which could not exceed three and twenty, ſeem'd to me a very moving plea in his behalf, and the graces of his mein and aſpect ſo much intereſted me in his favour, that I leſs blamed his inadvertency than compaſſionated the misfortune it had brought him into. In fine, his perſon and his ſufferings had made a very ſtrong impreſſion on me; he was the firſt object of my waking thoughts, and my impatience to be better acquainted with his circumſtances obliged me to leave my bed ſome hours before the time in which I was accuſtom'd to do ſo. I roſe in a hurry, tranſcribed what I had been relating, and got the dialogues expunged from my Tablets by the pure fingers of my little virgin; then haſted to the houſe where I had ſeen Clerimont enter the night before, and which, by the help of ſome lamps in the ſtreet, I had taken ſufficient notice of to be able to know again. The door was luckily open when I came

came to it; a ſervant-maid, who ſeemed to have more inclination to hold a goſſip's tale than to do the buſineſs ſhe was hired for, ſtood leaning with both her hands upon her mop, very earneſt in diſcourſe with one of her own occupation in the neighbourhood; a few words ſerved to convince me that theſe wenches were deſcanting on the affairs of the families they lived in, which, as I was not at preſent in a humour to pry into, I ſtaid not to hear what was ſaid, but went directly into the houſe, and up ſtairs, ſuppoſing Clerimont might be lodged in the firſt floor. I was not deceived, I found him writing at his bureau in the dining-room, a letter lay by him directed to Count Cogdy; this was folded and ready for ſealing, ſo it was not in my power to examine the contents; but his pen, on my entrance, was employ'd on another, which, looking over his ſhoulder, I ſaw was dictated in the following terms;

'My only dear, and for ever
'dear CHARLOTTE,

'A THOUSAND heart-renting ſighs,—a thou-
'ſand pangs, more terrible than any death can in-
'flict, accompany every ſyllable of this diſtracted
'epiſtle! I foreſee the anguiſh it will give you,
'and feel all the weight of yours added to my
'own. Oh, Charlotte! I muſt ſee you no more!
'— that love ſo long cemented by the utmoſt
'proofs of mutual tenderneſs, and ſo near being
'fulfill'd in a happy union, muſt be now broke off
'at once, — diſſolved for ever! I have renounced
'all claim to every future good, and juſtly incurr'd
'the fate that now attends me! — a few hours
'will inform you, that I either do not exiſt at all,
'or exiſt only to be a vagrant! a wretched exile
'from father, country, friends, and you, more

'dear

'dear than all! In fine, my Charlotte, ſuch is the 'ſad neceſſity to which I have reduced myſelf, as 'compels me to do a thing which nature moſt ab-'hors: I go this morning either to kill or be kill'd, 'which of theſe two ſhall happen is in the hand 'of Heaven; each equally tears me from every 'earthly comfort. I choſe to acquaint you previ-'ouſly with this accident, to the end you may be 'leſs ſurpriſed when you ſhall hear it from the 'mouth of others.—I can ſay no more.—Farewel, 'thou lovelieſt, beſt, and deareſt of thy ſex.—Hate 'not the memory of the undone

'CLERIMONT.

'P.S. As I have rendered myſelf unworthy of 'preſerving any marks of your affection, I return 'the ring with which you bleſt my finger in our 'happier days. Accept once more my laſt adieu; 'may endleſs bleſſings wait you, ſuperior, if poſ-'ſible, to my woes.'

This unhappy gentleman diſſembled not in the lines he wrote. his heart now labour'd with agonies greater than could be expreſs'd with words, and ſhew'd themſelves in every look and geſture. After having carefully incloſed the ring, and put both that and the letter under a cover, he order'd a chairman to be call'd, and delivering to him both theſe diſpatches, and telling him where they were to be carried, he proceeded to give ſome farther inſtructions: — 'This, to Miſs Charlotte, you are 'to leave with her ſervant, with orders to give it 'to her lady when ſhe is ſtirring: — this to Count 'Cogdy requires an immediate anſwer, which you 'muſt wait for.' The fellow, having aſſured him that he would be punctual in obeying his commands, went on his errand, and Clerimont continued walking backwards and forwards in the room with a motion extremely diſcompoſed, then

threw himſelf down on a ſettee, and preſently ſeem'd buried, as it were, in a profound reſverie.

I am pretty certain it was a full half hour before he exchanged this fixed and death-like poſition for one in a quite contrary extreme; his looks and geſtures now, methought, had ſomewhat like frantic in them: he beat his head againſt the wainſcot, ſtamp'd, and every now and then burſt into the moſt vehement exclamations,—ſome of which are theſe: 'How unhappy a creature is man! the very reaſon 'we are ſo proud of makes us miſerable! the 'brutes, equally void of paſſions as of ſorrow, 'neither feel torments here, nor dread a future 'hell! What will poor Charlotte ſay on reading 'my letter! How will my father ſupport the ſtory 'of my fate when it ſhall reach his ears! Wretch! 'wretch that I am, — born to be a curſe to all 'who love me!'

The return of the chairman brought him a little to his ſenſes, and he demanded haſtily whether he had got an anſwer from Count Cogdy; to which the man reply'd,

Chairman. No, ſir; I went there firſt, but the people of the houſe told me he was not ſtirring, nor they believed would be for a great while, ſo I went on to madam Charlotte's, and left the letter with her maid, as your honour bid me; but I had not got above half the ſtreet before her footboy ran after me, and ſaid his lady would ſpeak to me, on which I went back with him.

Clerimont. Charlotte already up!—that's ſtrange. —What did ſhe ſay to you?

Chairman. Sir, ſhe only aſk'd where the gentleman was that ſent the letter by me, and whether you were alone: I told her you were at home, and that there was nobody with you that I ſaw;— —ſhe ſaid it was very well, and I came away, went again to the Count's, and waited there 'til his

his own man told me that his maſter had not been in bed above two hours, and he was ſure would not riſe till twelve or one o'clock at ſooneſt; ſaid I might leave the letter, and come about that time for an anſwer;—now as I did not know whether that would be proper, I thought beſt to bring it back.

Clerimont. You did well;—I ſhall ſee him myſelf.

On this the Chairman laid down the letter on the table, and finding Clerimont had no farther commands for him withdrew. Clerimont then fell into a ſecond pauſe, but it laſted not long, and he cry'd out,—'Yes, I will go, and perhaps 'tis better 'that he did not ſee my billet; he might have 'found ſome way to evade the challenge I ſent 'him; but I ſhall now ſurprize and force him to 'accept it.'

While he was ſpeaking, he ſtepp'd to the cloſet and brought out a pair of pocket piſtols, with ſome ammunition to load them with; he was juſt beginning to perform that work when the maid of the houſe came up and told him a lady deſired to ſpeak with him. Clerimont turn'd haſtily about, but before he had time to ſpeak, his fair gueſt was in the room; Charlotte, for it was ſhe herſelf, but extremely diſordered both in her dreſs and looks. On finding how Clerimont was employ'd, ſhe thus accoſted him:

Charlotte. Oh, Clerimont!—Clerimont!—— what means that cruel letter you juſt now ſent me! Wherefore theſe dreadful preparations!—tell me, this inſtant tell me, or I ſhall die with apprehenſion!

Clerimont. Ah, Charlotte! never 'till now unwelcome to my ſight, why in this fatal moment doſt thou ſet before me that angelic form, which

ſerves but to remind me more of the Heaven I have loſt!

Charlotte. Shock not my ſoul with this deſpair, yet cruelly conceal from me the cauſe! I have a right to be made the partner of your griefs as well as joys; ſpeak then, I conjure you, let me know all.

Clerimont. I cannot!

Charlotte. You love me not if you hide ought from me! the worſt of evils could not give me half the pain as this uncertainty! Clear then the tempeſt on your brow, compoſe your mind, remove thoſe murd'rous inſtruments from my ſight, and,—Ha!—what's here!

In pointing towards the piſtols ſhe ſaw the letter directed to Count Cogdy, which ſhe haſtily ſnatch'd up, and went on, ſaying,

Charlotte. A letter to that infamous villain!—ah, then I gueſs what has happen'd;—ſome curſed gaming quarrel!—Clerimont, I muſt read this letter.

Clerimont. You may; it will in part reveal what my tongue has not the power to utter.

Ever ſince my coming into the room I had been extremely impatient to ſee the contents of this billet, ſo while the lady, with a trembling hand, was breaking open the ſeal, I ſlipp'd behind her, and read, at the ſame time ſhe did, theſe lines:

'SIR,

'I Remember that in the midſt of my confuſion laſt night you offered to give me my revenge whenever I ſhould demand it, which I now do, and expect you will meet me within an hour in the long field behind the baſon in Mary-le-bon, arm'd with ſword and piſtol; for it is not with cards or dice we now muſt try our ſkill: —you have left me nothing but my life to loſe,

'and

'and I am impatient 'till I ſtake it againſt yours; 'come without a ſecond, for I know no gentleman 'whom I would demean ſo far as to engage him 'with any of your infamous aſſociates. If you 'refuſe to comply with this ſummons, which does 'you too much honour, you may depend that the 'firſt time I ſee you, in what place ſoever it be, I 'ſhall make you an example to all ſcoundrels, 'cheats, and cowards. —— So no more at preſent 'from

'CLERIMONT.'

'P.S. Send your anſwer by the bearer.'

Charlotte. Then you would fight! would hazard a life ſo precious to me, only in revenge for being defrauded of a paultry ſum! Pray how much have you loſt?

Clerimont. My all.

Charlotte. Be more explicit.

He then related to her all the particulars of his misfortune, which, as the reader is already acquainted with, would be needleſs to repeat. When he had given over ſpeaking, Charlotte, with the greateſt ſerenity and ſweetneſs, ſaid to him,

Charlotte. And is this all that has diſconcerted you in ſo terrible a manner?

Clerimont. What means my Charlotte! —Am I not a beggar, irrecoverably a beggar!

Charlotte. How can that be, when you ſay the writings will be return'd to you on payment of a thouſand pounds? and am not I in poſſeſſion of eight times that ſum, which, with myſelf, you are ſhortly to be maſter of?

Clerimont. Plunder my Charlotte! no forbid it honour, juſtice, love! firſt let me periſh!

Charlotte. Be not ſo raſh; you muſt, you ſhall accept it.

Clerimont. O Charlotte! could I abuſe ſuch goodneſs, I were a villain, meaner, viler far than he that has undone me!

Charlotte. Indeed I will not be denied; and if you perſiſt in this obſtinacy, will go myſelf in perſon, pay the money, and redeem the obligation.

Clerimont. Oh, ſpeak not! think not of ſuch a thing, unleſs you wiſh to ſee me turn againſt myſelf one of thoſe weapons I intended for my adverſary.

Charlotte. Hold, Clerimont, forbear to fright me thus! Juſt as you ſpoke, a ſudden thought ſtarted into my head, as if there were a way to rid you of this incumbrance without any expence either to yourſelf or me.

Clerimont. How! by what miracle!

Charlotte. The project is not yet quite faſhioned in my brain; but you muſt come with me to my lodgings, for I dare not truſt you with yourſelf; as we go perhaps I may be able to bring my ſcheme to more perfection.

Clerimont. Oh, Charlotte, thy ſoftneſs quite unmans me.

Charlotte. No; 'tis your own deſpair unmans you; let me prevail on you to give only ſome reſpite to theſe horrible ideas.

Clerimont. Well, you muſt be obeyed, I will defer the execution of my intentions 'till another day.

Charlotte ſeem'd tranſported at having won thus far upon him, and a coach being call'd, they both went into it: I liſtened to the directions given where to drive, and eager to know what turn this affair would take, followed on foot as faſt as I was able.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

May poſſibly become the ſubject of ſome future comedy, as there is nothing in the ſtory that can be objected to by the Licenſe-Office.

AMONG all the indefatigable enquiries I had ſo long been making after things intended to be kept ſecret, never had my curioſity met with a greater diſappointment than it did at the time I am ſpeaking of: I arrived at the houſe where Charlotte lodged the very moment that the coach, which brought that lady and her lover thither, was diſcharged and driving off, and had the mortification to ſee the door ſhut when I was not at the diſtance of above ten paces from it. Every preſent minute however flattering me with the hopes that the ſucceeding ones would be more ſucceſsful, I waited, though I cannot ſay with much patience, about two hours, no one having any occaſion, I ſuppoſe, either to go out or in: — at laſt a friendly baker knocked at the door, which being open'd, I took the opportunity to ſlip in while he delivered a loaf of bread to the ſervant of the houſe.

I went up ſtairs, and found the perſons I ſought for in the dining-room: but here, alas, I was a ſecond time diſappointed, the grand conſultation between them was over before my entrance, and what I heard after I came in could not make me able to form any judgment of the ſubject they had been upon; I could only know that ſomething of great moment had been concluded, as the reader will eaſily perceive by the following ſhort dialogue:

Charlotte. You cannot imagine how much you have obliged me by this confeſſion; but I will not detain you leſt the villain ſhould be gone out. Re-

member to fix the appointment at ſeven, or between ſeven and eight this evening.

Clerimont. Yes, yes.

Charlotte. By that time I ſhall be able to get every thing in order, and you will ſee I ſhall play my part as well as the beſt actreſs of them all: do you take care that no unguarded look or word gives the Count any room to ſuſpect you are leſs in good humour than you pretend to be.

Clerimont. Fear not, I ſhall be cautious not to ſpoil ſo good a plot by my ill performance.

Charlotte. If it ſucceeds, as I have not the leaſt doubt it will, the ſtory will be a ſubject of mirth for us as laſting as our lives.

Clerimont. And as laſting a ſubject for my admiration of the wit and contrivance of my dear, dear Charlotte.

Charlotte. Well, well, defer your encomiums 'till a more ſeaſonable opportunity: I long methinks to have this buſineſs over, and it is high time for you to begin to ſet the firſt wheel of our machine in motion.

Clerimont. I am going.—Adieu, my love.

He accompanied theſe words with a very tender and paſſionate ſalute, then left the room; though I eaſily perceived that Charlotte had ſomewhat of great importance to tranſact in this affair, yet as I could not be in two places at once, I choſe to follow Clerimont. He went directly to Cogdy's lodgings, and on aſking if he were at home, was ſhew'd into a handſome parlour, where, after waiting about a minute, the Count's ſervant came to him, and ſaid his maſter had not been long out of bed, and was not quite dreſs'd, but deſired he would walk up; which he did, with his Inviſible attendant cloſe behind him. The Count no ſooner ſaw him enter, than he ran to embrace him with a French complaiſance, ſaying at the ſame time,

Cogdy.

Cogdy. Dear Clerimont, I am glad to ſee you.

Clerimont. My dear Count, a lucky morning to you.—I behaved ſomewhat odly laſt night, and could not be eaſy 'till I came and aſk'd your pardon.

Cogdy, Oh, ſir, you have it, you have it; —I thought no more of it; I know 'tis natural for a gentleman to be a little out of humour at firſt loſing his money.

Clerimont. But I was leſs excuſable than you imagine; for to confeſs the truth, I had in Bank-bills upwards of two thouſand pounds lying in my bureau at home, ſo was under no neceſſity either of playing either upon tick or of troubling a lawyer to mortgage the reverſion of my eſtate.

Cogdy. Is it poſſible! Are you in earneſt!

Clerimont. To convince you I am ſo, you ſhall have the teſtimony of your own eyes: ſee here, Count, and here.

In ſpeaking this he took out of his pocket-book ſeveral bills to the amount of the ſum he had mention'd: the Count ſtretch'd his eyes broad open, look'd at the bills, ſeem'd much ſurpriſed, and ſaid,

Cogdy. Theſe are Bank-bills indeed!

Clerimont. Aye, I can turn them into ready ſpecie at any banker's in town.

Cogdy. Well, I cannot help wondering how a man, who had two thouſand pounds by him, could ſuffer himſelf to be diſconcerted at the loſs of one.

Clerimont. Hang it, it was not the loſs of the money that vexed me; but I had the hypo, and that damn'd hyp makes one affront one's beſt friends.

Cogdy. So then I ſuppoſe you will redeem your mortgage?

Clerimont. Time enough for that. But now I think on it, you offer'd me my revenge, and I will e'en try my chance once more.

Cogdy. As how?

Clerimont. Why ſtake one of theſe thouſands againſt my mortgage; ſo either win the horſe or loſe the ſaddle.

Cogdy. With all my heart, — whenever you pleaſe.

Clerimont. Let it be to-night then.

Cogdy. Agreed. Will you ſtay and dine with me?

Clerimont. I am engaged with a young fellow juſt come to town, and to the poſſeſſion of a great eſtate; but I will meet you at night, and perhaps bring him with me.

Cogdy. Do; I ſhall be glad of his acquaintance.

Clerimont. We knew one another in the country, he will go any where with me.—But hark'ye, Count, I don't like that houſe we were in laſt night, every thing in it, methinks, has the face of poverty, and ill luck; my young ſpark is vaſtly nice, and will be apt to turn up his noſe at it; can't you think of a more agreeable place?

Cogdy. I know of ſeveral: the only reaſon that makes me chuſe to go thither ſo often, is becauſe I think it the moſt ſafe. This curſed act of parliament has laid ſuch reſtriction on us who love play, that it is not every where we dare venture to indulge ourſelves in that diverſion.

Clerimont. What objection have you to Mixum's, in ****** ſtreet?

Cogdy. 'Tis a good houſe, and excellent accommodation. But don't you know that it was ſearched three or four nights ago by a whole poſſe of conſtables?

Clerimont. Yes; but they found nothing of what they came to look for; therefore the moſt ſecure at preſent, as they will ſcarce come again in haſte.

Cogdy. Well then we will meet there if you pleaſe. At what hour?

Clerimont.

Clerimont. Seven, or a little after, if it ſuits you.

Cogdy. Extremely well; then we ſhall have the whole evening before us.

He was about to take his leave, and had roſe up for that purpoſe, when Wheadle, Hazard, and Coaxum, came all together into the room: they ſeem'd a little ſurpriſed at ſeeing him there, but ſaluted him with their uſual familiarity.

Hazard. Hah! dear Clerimont, good morning to you.

Wheadle. Now you look like yourſelf again; you were quite another man laſt night.

Coaxum. Aye, faith, you muſt expect to be well roaſted.

Clerimont. I know I deſerve it; but you muſt defer your ſarcaſms 'till night; for I am in great haſte at preſent,—ſo, gentlemen, your ſervant.

He was going out of the room with theſe words; but juſt as he came to the door, he turn'd back and ſaid to Count Cogdy,

Clerimont. Be ſure, Count, not to forget to bring the writings with you.

Cogdy. No, no, they have never been out of my pocket ſince you delivered them to me laſt night.

There paſs'd no more between them, Clerimont went haſtily down ſtairs, and I gladly would have follow'd him, but Hazard and Wheadle happen'd to ſtand between the door and the corner where I had unluckily poſted myſelf, ſo that it was impoſſible for me to remove my quarters without running a very great riſque of being felt either by the one or the other. During the ſhort time I was compelled to ſtay, I heard the following converſation, which I would not trouble my readers with the repetition of, but to ſhew what monſters

of mankin th eſe degenerate wretches are who get their livelihood by gaming.

Coaxum. What does he mean by writings? ſure he is not going to redeem his mortgage!

Cogdy. No; but he is going to ſend a thouſand, or 'tis likely two thouſand pounds after it. We have made an appointment to play again to-night.

Hazard. What upon tick?

Wheadle. Phoo, that is doing of nothing; the fool has no more eſtates in reverſion to make over.

Cogdy. You cannot imagine me ſo weak as to loſe my time with a fellow that has no money nor effects: no, no; I always go upon good grounds. I tell you he has two thouſand pounds in Bank bills; he ſhew'd them to me.

Hazard. How did he come by them!

Cogdy. 'Tis no matter to us how he came by them; we are ſure of making them ours before we ſleep.

Wheadle. They muſt certainly be bills his father has intruſted him with, to buy ſtock either for himſelf or ſome of his friends in the country; the young fellow will hang himſelf to-morrow, when he reflects on what he has done.

Hazard. Let him hang himſelf, when we have got all he has to loſe.

Cogdy. Aye, aye; but I can tell you better news than this, he brings a rich young heir with him, one that knows nothing of the world, a mere ſap, a green-horn: there will be fleecing, my boys!

Juſt as the Count had done ſpeaking, ſome little noiſe in the ſtreet made them all run to the windows, by which means I got the ſo-much wiſh'd-for opportunity of eſcaping from my confinement. When I found myſelf at liberty I began to conſider not only on what I had ſeen and heard, but alſo on what I had not ſeen nor heard; I was ſtill as much in the dark as ever as to Charlotte's contrivance,

trivance, and could not keep myſelf from fretting at the many diſappointments I had met with on that account: I was doom'd, however, to receive yet one more.

Though I doubted not but when the gameſters met the whole would be laid open to me, yet the time ſeemed too tedious for my impatience; I wanted to know the buſineſs of the plot before I ſaw it acted, and ſet myſelf to think on the moſt probable means to accompliſh my deſigns; accordingly I went to the lodgings of Charlotte, hoping to find Clerimont there, and diſcover ſomething farther by the diſcourſe they would have together; but to my great mortification perceived the room quite empty, except a little lap-dog lying on a cuſhion before the fire. I had now no other reſource than to go home to dinner, which I did, and after having got my Tablets made ready to receive a new impreſſion, diverted myſelf in the beſt manner I could, 'till the hour arrived which enabled me to explore what at preſent appeared ſo myſterious to me.

CHAP. VI.

Will put a final period to the ſuſpence of my readers, in relation to Clerimont and Charlotte.

AS precious a thing as time is, and as much as I always knew the real value of it, the hours, methought, moved ſlowly on till the clock ſtruck ſeven, and told me that I might now hope for the full ecclairciſement of an adventure I had already taken ſo much fruitleſs pains to explore. Pretty ſecure, however, that I ſhould not loſe my labour any more on this occaſion, I went with great glee and jollity of mind to the houſe of Mr. Mixum, Count

Count Cogdy and his three aſſociates came preſently after, and were ſhewed into the beſt room, where I accompanied them. On their calling for wine, Mixum came up with it himſelf to pay his compliments, as not having ſeen them for a conſiderable time, and there enſued ſome diſcourſe concerning the ſearch-warrant that had been granted againſt the houſe, the manner in which thoſe perſons who were there had made their eſcape from the officers, and ſuch like affairs, which not being at all material to my purpoſe, I not regarded, nor ſpread my Tablets to receive.

Within about half an hour Clerimont and his young friend appeared; the firſt ſight of the latter extremely ſtruck me, I thought I had ſomewhere ſeen that face, but when, or where, or on what occaſion, I could not preſently recollect, and it was ſome minutes before I knew this ſeeming beau for a real belle: in fine, it was no other than Charlotte herſelf: ſhe was, indeed, ſo artfully diſguiſed in all points, that a perſon much better acquainted with her features might have been deceived; her cheeks, which had naturally no more red in them than was neceſſary to preſerve her complexion from the character of a dead paleneſs, were now, by the help of Carmine, or Portugal paſte, of a high ruddy colour; her eye-brows, which were of a fine light-brown, were now black as jet; and that ſweet and modeſt air, ſo becoming in the amiable Charlotte, converted into one all bold and rakiſh.

Clerimont, with a well-diſſembled gaiety in his voice and countenance, preſented her to the company, telling them he had taken the liberty to introduce a friend, whoſe converſation he doubted not but would be agreeable to them. They received her with the greateſt politeneſs and good breeding; for I muſt here obſerve, that tho' theſe men, either through the calamities of the times or their

their own miſmanagement and ill conduct, were reduced to the wretched courſe they now took for ſubſiſtence, they had all of them been endow'd with a liberal education, and knew how to behave like perſons of real honour and faſhion whenever they found it ſuitable to their intereſt to do ſo. The glaſs went round two or three times while they talked only of ordinary matters; but our fair Amazon being impatient, I ſuppoſe, to put the finiſhing ſtroke to the ſtratagem ſhe had form'd, ſtarted up on a ſudden, and ſaid,

Charlotte. Well but, gentlemen, how are we to paſs the evening; I hope in ſomewhat more agreeable than mere chit-chat? Clerimont talk'd of play, and I ſee you have implements ready.

Cogdy. Sir, we amuſe ourſelves that way ſometimes, and if you chuſe it, ſhall be ready to oblige you.

Charlotte. Oh by all means; I love play extravagantly, the muſic of a dice-box is to me beyond all Handel's operas and oratorios: here is more real harmony than in the ſpheres themſelves, and I could dance eternally to the ſound. Come, gentlemen, which of you will engage me? I have ſome looſe pieces in my pocket, which I am ready to throw away, if chance ſhould ſo determine.

Hazard. Then, ſir, I am your man, if you think fit; for I know the Count has made an agreement to play with Clerimont on a very particular occaſion.

Charlotte. Then, ſir, I will content myſelf a while with being a by ſtander.

Hazard. You need not, ſir, you ſee here are more tables than one.

Charlotte. Aye; but I chuſe to bet on my friend's ſide.

Hazard. Nay, as you pleaſe for that; we ſhall any of us be ready to take you up.

The

The Count and Clerimont being now in an attitude to play, and the writings laid down on the one ſide, and a thouſand pound bank bill on the other, Charlotte cry'd out,

Charlotte. What! —paper againſt parchment! theſe are the oddeſt ſtakes I ever ſaw. Yours, Clerimont, I think, is a thouſand pounds?

Cogdy. I aſſure you, ſir, that mine is the full equivalent.

Charlotte. I believe ſo; but before you begin you muſt give me leave to ſpeak a word or two.

Cogdy. As many as you pleaſe, ſir.

Charlotte. It is only this; — you muſt loſe, Count.

Cogdy. Muſt loſe, ſir!

Charlotte. Aye, ſir, muſt loſe.

Cogdy. That, ſir, muſt happen as fortune ſhall decree.

Charlotte. Sir, I ſtand in the place of fortune, and tell you that you muſt loſe thoſe writings to Clerimont.

Hazard. What means all this!

Cogdy. I do not underſtand you, ſir.

Charlotte. I will ſpeak plainer; your falſe dice will be of no ſervice to you at this time; you muſt willingly return to Clerimont that deed of reverſion which you drew him in to ſign as a ſecurity for money you had baſely cheated him of; I ſay willingly, for if you do not I am come prepared with means to force you to it.

Cogdy. Sir, I ſcorn both your words and threats; I never cheated any man, nor will part with what chance has beſtowed upon me.

Hazard. 'Sdeath, ſhall we be bullied by ſuch a prig.

Charlotte. None of your big words, I have that will ſilence you; ſee here, the copy of a warrant from Juſtice Ferrit, to apprehend and bring before him

him the bodies of George Van Hellmock, alias Count Cogdy, John Hazard, Thomas Wheadle, and William Coaxum; the original of this is in the hands of perſons who, on the leaſt ſtamp of my foot, will come up and put it in execution.

The gameſters now looked on each other with all the marks of conſternation; but before they had time to make any reply to what Charlotte had ſaid, Mixum, all pale and trembling, came running into the room, and ſaid,

Mixum. Oh, gentlemen, we are all undone! three or four conſtables are at the door; one of my drawers ſaw them as he went out to carry a pint of wine to a neighbour's houſe; and there is a young man below too, who I dare ſay is a ſpy, for he does not ſtay in the room, but walks backwards and forwards in the entry, and looks at every body as they paſs by; ſo that there is no eſcaping either one way or the other.

Charlotte. He tells you truth; the perſon he ſpeaks of is planted there by me, and on my giving the ſignal will call in his mirmidons; ſo that you have nothing for it but to deliver the writings quietly to Clerimont; if you do this, I will inſtantly go down and ſend away the officers, under pretence that the information was wrong, and that no gameſters were here.

Cogdy. Confuſion! What is to be done!

Hazard. 'Sdeath, Count! — do not part with the writings! we'll fight our way through them!

Charlotte. Nay then I give the ſignal.

She advanced towards the door with theſe words: but Mixum threw himſelf between, and with the moſt pity-moving geſture, ſaid.

Mixum. Hold, ſir, I beſeech you! conſider I never offended you! — do not ruin me and my houſe for ever!

Clerimont.

Clerimont. Oh, you will be provided with lodgings in Bridewell, and fare no worſe than theſe worthy gentlemen here, your cuſtomers.

Cogdy. Well, I did not think Mr. Clerimont would have turned informer.

Clerimont. Nor did I think I had aſſociated myſelf with common ſharpers, cheats and villains, 'till laſt night convinced me of it.

Charlotte. Theſe altercations are only loſs of time, the officers will be impatient; ſpeak, Count, reſolve at once; ſhall I diſmiſs, or call them to the exerciſe of their function?

Cogdy. Hell and the devil! What ſay you, gentlemen?

Wheadle. E'en give up the writings, and the devil go with them.

Coaxum. Aye, aye, give them up.

Hazard. Since there is no remedy, I give my vote.

Cogdy. Nothing vexes me ſo much as to be thus outwitted, gull'd, trick'd. — There, Mr. Clerimont take back your mortgage; but I muſt tell you, ſir, that you have not acted like a gentleman.

Clerimont. I threw off the gentleman when I condeſcended to play in ſuch company; a gameſter is the loweſt and moſt infamous of all characters; nay, the moſt dangerous too; worſe even than a highway robber, — he takes but part; you plunder, without remorſe, the whole fortune of him whom you decoy into your ſnares: — nor can there be any excuſe from your neceſſities, while we have ſo numerous a fleet and ſtanding army, which are continually wanting recruits, and refuſe none who have health and vigour.

Cogdy. Sir, you have got what you wanted; ſo pray keep your remonſtrances to yourſelf.

Charlotte.

Charlotte. Aye, aye, advice is loſt on ſuch hardened profligates. Come, let us go.

Clerimont. I attend you.

Neither Clerimont nor his fair champion ſaid any more, but went directly out of the room; a volley of curſes from the mouths of all theſe miſcreants purſued their ſteps. I had no inclination to ſtay where I was; but juſt as I paſs'd the door I heard Jack Hazard, who was the moſt violent of the four, ſay to his companions, 'It is that ſaucy, 'pert, young coxcomb that has ſpirited up Cleri-'mont to do all this; but if ever I meet him in a 'convenient place, I'll pink him. — I'll make a 'loop-hole in his fleſh big enough to let out twenty 'ſuch puny ſouls.'

I could not forbear laughing within myſelf at this menace, which, though it ſhew'd the villainous diſpoſition of the wretch who ſpoke it, I knew was impoſſible ever to reach the perſon it was levelled againſt. The amiable and witty Charlotte kept her promiſe, and on her coming down ſtairs, gave orders to the young man who waited her commands to ſend away the conſtables; after which ſhe took coach with her lover, attended with as many bleſſings and good wiſhes from Mixum as ſhe had been loaded with curſes from thoſe above.

As I could expect no more from this adventure than the retribution of Clerimont to his beloved Charlotte for the happy deliverance ſhe had given him from deſtruction, and which I could eaſily conceive without hearing, I returned to my own apartment, in order to get my Tablets made ready for the acquiſition of ſome new diſcovery. I muſt not, however, take leave of theſe lovers without letting the public know that a marriage between them, which had ſome time before been agreed upon, is now conſummated, and that Clerimont, ſincerely

cerely touched with the danger he has eſcaped, has made a firm reſolution never to play but for ſmall ſums, and for thoſe only with perſons whoſe honour and integrity he is well aſſured of. As for the gameſters, they ſtill continue to infeſt this great town, like Satan watching to devour all the prey they can get into their clutches; if this little narrative may warn any one perſon to avoid the ſnare, the pains I have taken to explain it will be well rewarded.

CHAP. VII.

Contains ſomething which perhaps there are more ladies than one will not think themſelves obliged to the author for reveal'ing.

THERE is no reſentment ſo implacable and laſting as that which is occaſioned by love converted into hatred by ill treatment; and by the more ſlow degree this paſſion riſes in our minds, the more virulent it becomes after having once gained poſſeſſion.

Cleanthes, a gentleman of good family, great worth, and opulent eſtate, loved to the moſt romantic exceſs a young woman, who, excepting a tolerable ſhare of beauty, had no one real charm to recommend her to a perſon of his character: ſhe was meanly born, more meanly educated;—ſhe was ſilly, vain, capricious, and of a reputation not quite unblemiſhed. Yet did he no ſooner become acquainted with her, than he broke off the addreſſes he had long made to a lady of great merit and fortune; and in a ſhort time, contrary to all the remonſtrances and diſſuaſions of his friends, publickly married her.

Being

Being a huſband, made him not leſs a lover; his obſequiouſneſs is not to be parallel'd; his whole ſtudy was to pleaſe her, every ſucceeding day brought with it an addition of his dotage of her; he was always happy in her preſence, never eaſy in her abſence; and, to uſe Shakeſpear's expreſſion,

Appetite increaſed by what it fed on.

Aglaura, for ſo ſhe is call'd, had ſo little ſenſe of the happineſs ſhe enjoy'd, or affection or gratitude for the man who beſtow'd it on her, that ſhe preſently gave the greateſt looſe to her too amorous inclinations; thought of nothing but engaging new admirers, and to that end made advances, which it would be ſhocking to repeat, to every pretty fellow ſhe came in company with, even before the face of her much injur'd huſband, who, blinded by his paſſion, for a long time look'd on all ſhe did as proceeding only from the too great vivacity of her temper. Had ſhe obſerved the leaſt degree of circumſpection in her amours, he would ſcarce ever have believed there was a poſſibility of her being guilty; but ſhe took no pains to deceive him, and tho' ſhe knew he lived but in her ſight, was ſcarce ever at home; and through the want either of artifice or complaiſance, gave herſelf not the pains of making any excuſes for her continual rambles.

This made him at laſt fall into a deep melancholy; yet ſtill he loved her, and could not for a great while prevail on himſelf to lay any reſtrictions on her conduct: all who had any knowledge of the manner in which they lived together, while they highly condemned her treatment of him, were ready to deſpiſe his lenity and forbearance. At length, however, the tables were entirely turned; from having been at firſt the moſt fond, and afterwards

wards the paſſive huſband, he became, all at once, the moſt cruel and tyrannic; he took from her all the jewels and other ornaments he had beſtowed upon her, lock'd her into a garret, ſuffered no one to come near her, except a ſervant who carried food to her of the coarſeſt kind, and no more than would juſt ſuffice to keep her from periſhing.

It cannot be ſuppoſed but that ſo ſtrange an alteration in the behaviour of the late fond, and indeed madly doating Cleanthes, muſt become the ſubject of much converſation in town. A lady of my acquaintance, who is reckoned to have ſome taſte for poetry, ſhew'd me a few lines ſhe had wrote on the occaſion, which I think may not be diſagreeable to my readers.—They are as follow:

On the preſent Cruelty of CLEANTHES *to a* WIFE *whom he once loved to as great an exceſs.*

AS tapers languiſh at th' approach of day,
And, by degrees, melt ſlow their ſhine away,
Awhile they glimmer with contracted fires,
Trembling, unable to relax their ſpires;
But when the ſun's broad eye is open'd wide,
And beams, thick flaſhing, ſhoot no every ſide,
No more their emulative force they try,
But, ſtruck with radiance, ſink at once and die.
So in his heart love long maintain'd its pace,
'Till full conviction glar'd him in the face,
And forc'd th' unwilling ſoftneſs to give way
To hate, and rage, and fierce reſentment's ſway.
Unhappy man!
What wild extremes hurry thy head-ſtrong will?
What boiſt'rous paſſions thy vex'd boſom fill?
To reaſon's ſacred rules a truant ſtill.
Whoe'er he be the golden mean foregoes,
Exchanges hop'd-for joys for certain woes.

By

By all the diſcourſes I heard wherever I went, concerning this affair, I found, that though ſcarce any one pitied Aglaura, yet almoſt every one condemned Cleanthes, no leſs for his preſent ill uſage of her, than they had formerly done for the extravagance of his love.

'It is beneath the dignity of a man of ſenſe or 'honour, — ſaid one, — to treat thus inhumanly 'a woman, how unworthy ſoever ſhe may be, who 'is yet his wife.'

'If ſhe is really guilty of having wronged his 'bed,—cry'd another,—as indeed there is not the 'leaſt room to doubt, why, on the diſcovery of her 'crime, did he not turn her out of doors? —why 'did he not ſue for a divorce?'

It is certain that his way of proceeding with her appeared ſo odd, that many people were apt to think that her preſent ſufferings were rather owing to a change in his own humour than to any detection he had made of her falſhood:—others, on the contrary, imagined he ſtill loved her, and that after he had puniſhed her a while he would forgive all that was paſt, and again take her to his boſom. Various, and widely different conjectures were formed in relation both to the huſband and the wife, at all which I laugh'd in my ſleeve, believing, I dare ſay, with a good deal of reaſon, that no one perſon in the whole world, except the Inviſible Spy, was at the bottom of this ſecret; the means by which I became maſter of it I ſhall now acquaint my readers with.

I ſupp'd one night at the houſe of an intimate friend at Kenſington, and happening to ſtay there more late than it was judged ſafe for me to go home alone, was very much preſs'd by him to take a ſervant with me; but knowing I had better ſecurity about me than any ſervant could be, rejected his offer, and when I was got a little way from the

the houſe girded on my Belt of Inviſibility, and walk'd on at my leiſure, equally free from danger as from fear.

Many minutes had not elapſed in this employment before I was diſturbed from it by the murmurs of ſome human voices which I heard at a ſmall diſtance; my natural curioſity making me draw nearer to the place whence the ſound proceeded, I eaſily diſtinguiſhed a man of good appearance holding by the arm a genteel well-dreſs'd woman, whom he ſeemed rather to drag than lead. As theſe perſons were no other than Cleanthes and Aglaura, I ſhall inſert what was ſaid by each of them under their reſpective names.

Cleanthes. Shameleſs wretch! — Can you call it an innocent frolic to come to the door of a public coffee-houſe, and ſend in for your gallant! — Had I not happened to be there, had not theſe eyes and ears been witneſſes of your guilt, you might, and doubtleſs would have deny'd, forſworn it.

Aglaura. I meant no harm; I only wanted to rally him a little about ſomething I had heard concerning him.

Cleanthes. Infamous abandon'd proſtitute. Have I not an hundred times inſiſted on your never ſpeaking to that fellow more, nor to that other coxcomb, Le Brune, yet had you not the front to run arm in arm this morning with the one into the vineyard in the face of the whole Mall, and at night came in purſuit of the other! But this is no time for expoſtulation; I am now convinced of the injury you have done me.

I kept pretty near to them, 'till they got into a coach, and drove away, and I went home ſo much aſtoniſhed at what I had heard that I had not power to make any reflections on it for ſome time.

My

My mind, however, grew more ſettled night's repoſe, and impatient to know how they would behave to each other after what had paſs'd, I went directly to their houſe: Cleanthes was up alone, and at breakfaſt. — Soon after my entrance, a ſervant-maid came in and ſaid to him,

Maid. Sir, my lady has call'd for a diſh of chocolate; but I would not preſume to carry any up without your permiſſion, as your orders laſt night were ſo poſitive that ſhe ſhould be fed with nothing but water-gruel and dry bread.

Cleanthes. Why then do you trouble me now? — Do you think I gave orders at night to retract them in the morning?—Be gone, and let me hear no more of it.

The maid withdrew, and I followed her to the room where Aglaura was now lodged, which was indeed a wretched garret: ſhe was in bed weeping; but on the maid's repeating the commands of Cleanthes, her tears flow'd faſter: — ſhe wrung her hands,—ſhe beat her breaſt; but it is more eaſy for the reader to conceive her deſpair than for me to expreſs it, ſo I ſhall only ſay the ſpectacle was too moving, I could not bear it, but left the houſe immediately, and return'd not thither 'till after eight or ten days, in which time the town was appriſed of the ſufferings of Aglaura, and ſpoke of the ſtrange change of Cleanthes in the manner I have already related.

On my next viſit Cleanthes had with him an elderly lady, who I afterwards underſtood was his aunt: ſhe came, it ſeems, to perſuade him to treat his tranſgreſſing wife with leſs ſeverity; — the diſcourſe between them was as follows:

Lady. I am as ſenſible as you can be of the faults of Aglaura, and the diſhonour ſhe has brought upon you; yet, my dear nephew, you demean

yourſelf by uſing in this faſhion a woman, who, though unworthy, is ſtill your wife.

Cleanthes. Madam, I can no longer think of her as a wife, nor even as a woman; but as a dog that had bit me, or a ſerpent that had ſtung me.

Lady. Put her then out of your houſe.

Cleanthes. That would be giving her an opportunity of diſgracing me more by her proſtitutions: no, ſince I have not proofs for a divorce, I will confine her here 'till I can ſend her for ever from my ſight: I have already wrote to a tenant of mine in Yorkſhire; he will be in town next week, and take her with him to his houſe.

The good lady took her leave, after having heard and approved this reſolution, which, as I have been ſince informed, he put in execution as he had ſaid.

The CONCLUSION.

HERE, O reader! a total ſtop is put to my endeavours to oblige thee! — Nature has baffled all my vain precautions to preſerve my little virgin in her native purity.—The woman, whom I appointed to attend her, accidentally dropped from her pocket the picture of a very lovely youth; —the girl, unfortunately for me, as well as for thee, took it up, was charm'd with it;—ſleep renewed the pleaſing image in her mind, and added life and motion to it: — ſhe dreamed that it was her bedfellow; — that it kiſs'd, embraced, and lay within her arms;—ſo that in ſpite of all my cares, and without ever having ſeen the ſubſtance of a man, ſhe has received an indea of the difference of ſexes.

Her

Her pretty fingers no longer have the power to cleanſe my Tablets; — the dialogue laſt repeated remains ſtill unexpunged, and leaves no room for any future impreſſion. — How grievous a diſappointment to me! — how terrible a mortification! but we muſt all ſubmit to deſtiny, which compels me now to bid thee eternally adieu!—adieu!—adieu!

FINIS.

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